No. 638.] FOR WEEK ENDING MARCH 23, 1901. [ONE PENNY.

SHORT STORIES

A WEEKLY MAGAZINE FOR HOME AND TRAIN

ONE PENNY

**

Every Tuesday.

The astounding adventures of Hugo Pontifex (*see inside*) are causing a great sensation.

Digitized by Google

KAPUTINE

The Best & Safest Remedy for

HEADACHE.

NURSE HILL, of the London Association of Nurses, writes:

"I have seen Kaputine administered to many patients, and can truly say it is a remedy which should have a place in every household."

All Leading Chemists sell KAPUTINE, 1/-. Samples One Penny.

If your Chemist has not KAPUTINE send his name and address to KAPUTINE, HUDDERSFIELD, and we will send you a SHILLING PACKET FREE.

WORTH A CROWN A DOSE.

U. R. IN LUCK in seeing this advertisement, which will put you into communication with one of the most liberal firms in Europe — from whom you will be able to Purchase the Finest Goods at

ABSOLUTELY WHOLESALE PRICES.

Send your Name and Address to H. SAMUEL (a post-card will do) for a copy of

H. Samuel's Bargain Book 25/-

Nearly **200** pages, adorned with over **3,000** illustrations and descriptions of **Gold** and **Silver Watches, Jewellery, Diamonds, Plate, Cutlery,** etc., etc.

FREE BONUS REWARDS

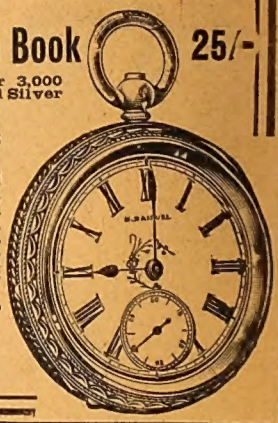
Ten Lists of Presents for Selection.

H. Samuel's Lady's 'Acme' Watch

contains special inventions protected by **Royal Letters Patent,** and obtainable only in **H. Samuel's Watches.** Fine Three-quarter Plate, Jewelled, Richly Decorated Dial (plain if preferred), and Highly Engraved Case. Warranted for **Five Years,** and sent with **BONUS FREE GIFT** on receipt of **25s.**

A FULL MONTH'S FREE TRIAL is allowed with every article.

H. SAMUEL (Dept. 29), 95, 97, 99, 101, 89, and 121 Market S., MANCHESTER.



"WORTH A GUINEA A BOX."

BEECHAM'S PILLS

FOR ALL

BILIOUS & NERVOUS DISORDERS, Sick Headache, Constipation, Wind and Pains in Stomach, Impaired Digestion, Disordered Liver, and Female Ailments.

SALE OVER SIX MILLION BOXES YEARLY.

In Boxes, 1s. 1½d. and 2s. 9d. each, with full directions.

Prepared only by the Proprietor,

THOMAS BEECHAM, St. Helens, Lancashire.

Sold by all Druggists and Patent Medicine Dealers everywhere.

ESTABLISHED 1851.

BIRKBECK BANK

Southampton Buildings, Chancery Lane, London.

2% on CURRENT ACCOUNTS, on the minimum monthly balances when not drawn below **£100.**

The BIRKBECK ALMANACK, with full particulars, post free.

FRANCIS RAVENSCROFT, *Manager.*

PHOTOS. PHOTOS. PHOTOS.

FROM

Carte or Cabinet.

One permanent 12 by 10 Enlargement, Mounted on Plate sunk mount, measuring 20 by 16, with six highly-glazed cabinet Portraits of same for **10/6.**

3 Cabinets **2/6**; 6 for **3/6**; 12 for **6/-**. 6 Cartes **2/-**; 12 for **3/-**; 24 for **5/6.** All sent carriage paid. Send to-day P.O. to H. BRADBURY, Photographer, The Chase, SOUTHGATE.

ALL FAT PEOPLE

can safely **Reduce Weight and cure Corpulency permanently** by taking **TRILENE TABLETS** (Regd.) for a few weeks. They are small, agreeable, harmless, and never fail to IMPROVE both HEALTH and FIGURE without Change of Diet. An English Countess writes: "*Your Trilene Tablets act admirably.*"

Send 2s. 6d. to **THE TRILENE CO.,** Sole Proprietors, **66 Finsbury Pavement, London.**

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

Princess Liechtenstein writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send your excellent tablets directly." Mr. Canham, 87 Alexandra Road, Norwich: "Tablets cured my wife of extreme stoutness; it has never returned." Mrs. H. Cox, 28 Watnall Road, Hucknall Torkard, writes: "The Tablets reduced me 1½ stone." Mrs. S. Alexander, 102 Dixon Street, New Swindon, says: "They reduced me 23lb., and I am cured." Mrs. Darnley-Smith, of Landscove Vicarage, Ashburton, says: "Tablets have reduced me very much." Mrs. Crossley, of Rose Hill, Torver, Comston, says: "I weigh much less and can breathe so much easier; I am delighted."

NEW AUTOMATIC KNITTER

FOR HOME WORK.

15/- to 30/- Weekly.

"The machine that knitted the hosiery and comforts for the troops in Africa."—See what *The Times* said.

Knits Socks (a pair in 35 min.), Stockings, Fancy Goods, &c. Easily learned. Lessons Free.

Cash, hire, and Work Terms from "Sorres" dept.: 67 Southwark St., S.E.; 55 Oxford St., W.; 192 Upper St., London, N.; 105 Nicolson St., Edinburgh; 58 Union St., Glasgow; 132 Stephen's Green, Dublin; 62 Great Hampton St., Birmingham; 31 Stokes Croft, Bristol.

Advertisements should be sent to "Short Stories" Advertisement Department, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Digitized by Google

SHORT STORIES.

No. 638.] For the Week Ending March 23rd, 1901. [ONE PENNY.

A Keeper of Secrets

By R. NORMAN SILVER.

Being Days in the Professional Life of the late Mr. Hugo Pontifex, the Famous West-end Solicitor.

To those who had only met him casually in Society, the late Mr. Pontifex was a good-tempered mystery. Bluff, handsome, and, in spite of his middle-age, a little of a dandy, he seemed the last man in the world to deserve his reputation, which was that of the keenest, most audacious, and unerring of family lawyers. Fair-haired, and powerful as an athlete, his striking appearance was increased by his eyes, one of which was grey and one blue.

In reality, however, Hugo Pontifex had a wide and almost exclusively aristocratic practice. He seldom briefed a barrister, seldom set foot in a court of justice, but single handed he hunted down, captured, and safely buried mystery after mystery of terrible import to Mayfair and Belgravia.

An expert in strangling scandal, he lived a life of enthralling interest, and died a rich man. When his executors went through his papers they found nothing to satisfy their curiosity, though plenty to excite it. Hugo Pontifex knew the value of fire—and the dangers of ink. But from time to time he related to the writer, who enjoyed a certain measure of his confidence, the incidents which form the basis of the following stories. In speaking of these strange fragments of drama, Mr. Pontifex himself employed fictitious names, the present author being left to guess vainly at the identity of the genuine actors.

THE SHADOW ON THE NORRIS MILLIONS.

AMONG the most memorable of Mr. Pontifex's clients was an American, tall, spare, clean-shaven, sallow, yet good-looking—there was something about him that proclaimed his nationality even before he had opened his firm, rather melancholy mouth. He did not enter the lawyer's private room alone; with him was a woman—a woman who was unmistakably a lady.

The solicitor's glance rested appreciatively on this latter caller—she was dark, slender, singularly graceful, and not without the more usual beauties of profile and complexion. Yet that which had arrested Mr. Pontifex's attention in particular was the rare strength of will and character stamped upon the pretty face. It betrayed to his critical consideration, a coolness, intelligence, and resolution seldom found in so ripe and delicate a countenance.

The American scrutinized keenly the great lawyer into whose presence he had just been shown. After a rapid survey he drew a sigh of relief.

"I'm real pleased to meet you, Mr. Pontifex," he said, placing one of the carved oak chairs for his companion, and pausing by it. "Pray forgive my hesitation. But I'd only heard you spoken of and I wanted to see what I thought of you before ——"

"Before trusting me," added Mr. Pontifex, frankly, "and now that you have made up your mind to do so, won't you sit down, Mr.—Mr. Norris?"

The solicitor had consulted rapidly the card on his blotting-pad. The name it bore was "Richard Norris."

A smile flickered round the American's lips, but he proved the correctness of Mr. Pontifex's conclusion by sinking into a lounge near the writing-table.

"Before I can explain what I wish you to do for me," said Richard Norris, "I shall have to go back a bit and tell you a sort of a story. You may have heard of me—I struck it fairly rich out at Klondyke, and the newspapers gave me no peace for a while. My name was bandied about from London to 'Frisco. That's where the trouble comes in."

He stopped and turned towards the slight figure beside him. A pitiful expression softened his grave features.

"My wife—Mr. Pontifex," he observed.

The solicitor bowed.

As she returned the salutation, the dark eyes of Mrs. Norris encountered those of Mr. Pontifex; there was a profound sadness in her gaze.

"My life has been but rough-and-tumble," said the American, "with nothing to boast of in much of it, except that it was honest."

A sudden tremor shook the young frame of the woman in the carved oak chair, she raised a gloved hand to wipe away a tear. Richard Norris sighed heavily and bent his head for a moment. When he spoke again it was in the same quiet tone.

All rights reserved.]

Digitized by Google

"Some three or four years ago," he pursued, "I was in California—at Santa Mercia—horse-breeding, with a man named Edwin Prior."

The American pronounced the last two words with a forced calmness that Mr. Pontifex noted, as he noted many things, in silence.

"I wasn't a partner," continued Richard Norris; "but manager. I had been unlucky in a fruit-growing speculation and froze on to the first chance of a living. At Santa Mercia I grew acquainted with Mab here—she was Prior's cousin, the child of an aunt that had kept house for him before she died. Mab and I fell in love, and Prior, who fancied Mab himself, soured on me. You take the situation, I guess, Mr. Pontifex."

"Oh, if you could," she cried, "you would make me a happy woman again!"

"Perfectly," said the lawyer; he was covertly studying the countenance of Mrs. Richard Norris.

"Mab warned me," admitted the American; "yet I saw no reason to quit my job till Prior should actually present me with my walking ticket. Mab was right, though; a week later I was in prison, charged by Prior with embezzling some thousand dollars. I had received the money beyond a doubt, signed a receipt, and locked the amount in a drawer against my next visit to the bank. From that drawer the money was stolen, Mab and I believe, by Prior.

"The following day he had asked for the dollars, and, as I failed to produce them, had me arrested. To everyone's amazement, on the morning I came before the judge, Mab appeared in court with the money, which she said she had found in the drawer next to that where I believed myself to have placed the dollars. I had evidently made a mistake, she remarked. Everyone but Prior was delighted, and I was discharged amid congratulations."

Richard Norris took a long breath and knitted his brows. His wife's cheeks coloured painfully. The American went on with his narrative.

"Once I was free I threatened all kinds of actions against Prior. Mab was terrified, and begged me to leave Santa Mercia instantly. When I refused she broke down and told me everything. Mr. Pontifex, the money that Mab had brought into court so opportunely was not the money that had been missed—Mab had drawn it from her cousin's bank on a cheque that she had made out herself."

Mabel Norris laid a hand on the speaker's arm, interrupting him with a tremulous gesture.

"My husband means a cheque that I had forged, Mr. Pontifex," she said bravely.

Mr. Pontifex was twisting his sapphire ring.

"The Law, Mrs. Norris," he answered thoughtfully, "prohibits forgery as it does murder, on general principles. It ignores the exceptional cases in which so-called crimes may have a moral justification. It is the task of such a man as myself to screen those cases from the sight of the Law. Believe me, the Law is very often willing to help in the process by looking the other way. But what was the precise point upon which you desired my advice?"

"I beg your pardon," rejoined his client, "naturally that is what you are waiting for. Fearing for Mab—and indeed myself—when her cousin should discover what had happened, I decided to get out of California with all speed. Going down to 'Frisco I was caught in the Klondyke boom. We travelled to the Yukon, Mab and I together—we had been married in 'Frisco—and I did uncommonly well. I am reckoned to-day to be worth three or four million dollars—I really am worth a couple. The papers wrote me up, of course, and in doing so set on our track the very man we most wanted to keep off it—Ned Prior, the holder of that cheque."

Mr. Pontifex was brooding over his sapphire—it seemed the exact tint of his blue eye. Mrs. Norris contemplated him, almost wonderingly.

"Luckily for us," proceeded the American; "Ned had tumbled to the fact that the cheque gave him a big hold over poor Mab, and, instead of applying to the criminal authorities, tried to pick up her trail. When he got on mine, through the newspapers, it was to find that I had married Mab and was a millionaire. Ned had been doing badly and was in want of funds. So he sent me an ultimatum. Unless I pay him at an early date, three million dollars—six hundred thousand pounds—in first-class securities, he will have my poor Mab extradited and tried for forgery, besides reviving the old trouble about the money that disappeared from my drawer."

"£600,000," repeated Mr. Pontifex slowly, "and you are worth at most, you say, £400,000?"

Digitized by Google

"Two million dollars in American currency," said Richard Norris, "and not that, to realise. Now, Mr. Pontifex, as I'm not fool enough to write about such an affair as this, and I daren't see Ned myself lest I should be tempted to drill a hole in him, I should be glad if you would be my messenger. He can have £250,000 within a month, and in exchange for the cheque which Mabel drew. It will cost me the balance of my fortune to collect that amount in gilt-edged scrip. But if he will take it and give you the cheque, I will start at the bottom of the ladder again with a light heart."

Mr. Pontifex abandoned his indolent attitude and his ring-twisting to lean an elbow upon his writing-table.

"Mr. Norris," he replied deliberately, "you shall not regret consulting me in this matter. I will see this preposterous blackmailer, not, with your permission, to offer him any such terms, but to deal with him, I suspect, even more efficaciously. This I believe I *can* undertake, that you shall have the cheque without publicity and without beggering yourself."

Mabel Norris sprang up.

"Oh, if you could," she cried, "you would make me a happy woman again, and Dick need not ruin himself."

The American interposed, affectionately but determinedly.

"Mab," he said, "I thought we had done with that foolishness. Mr. Pontifex, you have my full consent to make the best bargain you can. But don't try to bluff Ned; he's a smart man, and carries a gun—that is to say, a revolver. He's a dead shot, and easily riled—you'll excuse my mentioning the fact, but you may not be used to such cattle as Ned in this law-abiding island of yours."

Mr. Pontifex fell into a momentary reverie. He roused himself from it to ask abruptly:

"What species of revolver does this rascal Prior affect? An American type, I suppose?"

Richard Norris thrust his hand into a hip-pocket and produced a compact yet formidable weapon.

"The fellow to that," he said, "or did when I knew him; it is a nice gun and one that you can get fond of."

The lawyer took the revolver and examined it. Unexpectedly he opened the breech and began to pull out the cartridges, which he thrust towards the millionaire.

"I will borrow this," he remarked; "I shall not need the ammunition."

The American stared at him—Mr. Pontifex rose.

"I am a man of impromtu ideas," he said; "where can I drop across your friend Prior? Write it down for me."

Richard Norris moved to the solicitor's seat and did as he was requested.

Mr. Pontifex stepped to the side of his client's wife.

"I can see you to be a woman of character and courage," he murmured; "will you confide yourself to me, alone, for a little time. We may be able together to scotch this relative of yours?"

Mabel Norris looked up searchingly.

"I will do anything you tell me," she responded in a shy fashion. But Mr. Pontifex saw that she meant what she said.

Her husband had finished the memorandum he was

Mabel Norris fell heavily to the floor.

engaged upon. The address was that of a house in a low street in Pimlico.

"Thank you," commented the lawyer, reading it, "and now, Mr. Norris, I want you to allow your wife to accompany me—unattended—to this place." He flipped the piece of paper on which Richard Norris had written the direction.

The American frowned undecidedly, but Mabel Norris stole close to him.

"Let us trust Mr. Pontifex, dearest," she whispered. "He is a great English lawyer, and can wish us no possible harm. Somehow, I feel a strange faith in him."

Richard Norris straightened himself proudly.

"Mr. Pontifex," he said, "you shall have your way. But if Mabel respects my desire she will not lower herself by any appeals for mercy."

The lawyer received the information without comment.

"Very well," he answered; "I shall hope to restore Mrs. Norris before the expiration of many hours—I will myself escort her to your hotel. Forgive me, if for the present, I ask you to say *au revoir*."

He rang the bell and ordered the clerk to get a cab.

Digitized by Google

Donning his glossiest "silk," Mr. Pontifex led the American and his wife into St. James' Street. He assisted Mrs. Norris into the hansom, and, with a hasty farewell to her husband, followed her. The American regarded amazedly the retreating vehicle; Mr. Pontifex's rapidity had left him breathless.

Mr. Pontifex threw up the cap, and told the driver to make a call in Bond Street—at the establishment of an expert firm of gunsmiths. Reaching that stage of their journey, he descended, passed into the shop, and was absent for ten minutes. When he returned and they were on the route to Victoria, he showed his fair neighbour the revolver he had borrowed from Richard Norris. It was now apparently loaded.

"These, Mrs. Norris," he explained cheerfully, "are blank cartridges, and incapable of doing much harm to anybody. If by chance you should hear some shots fired this afternoon, it will be from these cartridges, and you need not be in the smallest degree alarmed. By-the-bye, can you act?"

"I think so," responded Mabel Norris, extremely interested. "Most women, they say, are actresses by instinct."

"It is probable," said the solicitor drily. "I feel sure you are one. All that I wish you to do is to faint—or pretend to faint—at a particular juncture. At that juncture I shall say, 'You once loved her—do you not see that she is ill with terror?' As I speak the word 'terror,' count five quickly and then—faint. You comprehend?"

"Quite," said his pupil; "and how long must I be—unconscious?"

"Let me see," muttered Mr. Pontifex. "Yes, until I observe 'It is nothing serious.' Then recover artistically; and whatever happens after that, keep cool."

He commenced to gossip of indifferent subjects—the weather, the thoroughfares, the people in them. Mabel Norris marvelled at the lawyer's command over his nerves.

Near a shabby lodging-house in Pimlico the cab halted. Mr. Pontifex dismissed it, rang, and demanded to see "Mr. Prior—on business." The two were ushered upstairs and into a dingy parlour, clouded with tobacco smoke, where sat, in shirt-sleeves and slippers, a typical Yankee, puffing at a fat cigar.

"What do you mean by business?" he snarled, "I haven't the pleasure of knowing you from Adam—Jehoshaphat!" he broke off, "it's Mabel."

He leapt to his feet and would have advanced, but the lawyer stepped in front of his charge.

"I am here," said Mr. Pontifex, "representing my client Mr. Richard Norris—you will guess upon what errand."

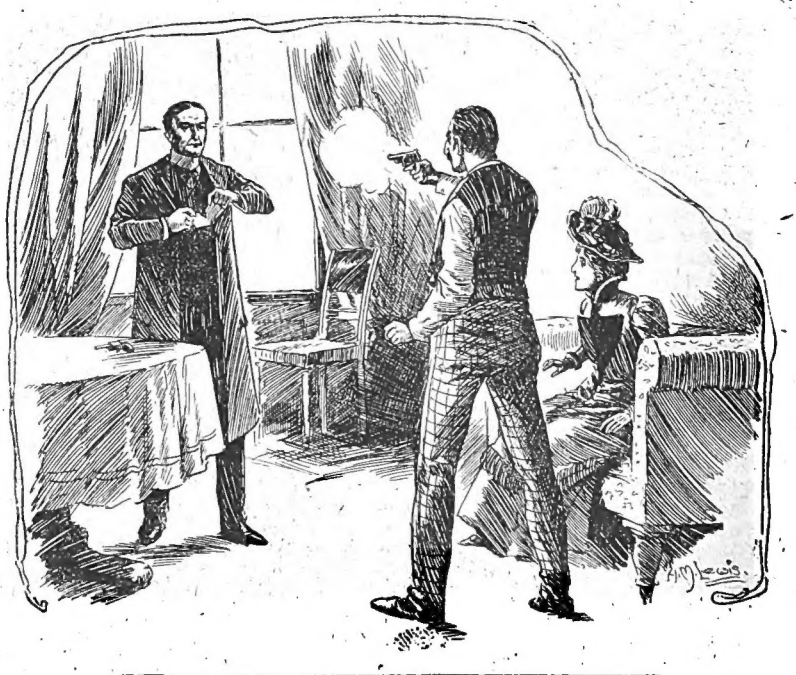
He handed his companion to a sofa, and himself sat down by a large round table in the middle of the apartment, motioning their host to the chair he had been occupying. It stood on the further side of the table. Edwin Prior dropped into it sulkily.

Mr. Pontifex coughed, as if embarrassed.

"Previous to raising the object of my mission, Mr. Prior," he stammered, with assumed uneasiness, "I may inform you that I am aware of your American practice of going armed, and realise that you are not a man likely to respect our British prejudice against pistol-shooting. I have therefore taken the precaution of not visiting you weaponless myself."

He was counterfeiting admirably the faltering, conventional air of a respectable solicitor in an awkward position. But Edwin Prior beheld the barrel of a revolver peeping at him over the edge of the round table, and laughed outright. "Calm yourself, my nervous man at law;" he said, "this isn't a question of pistols, but of diplomacy."

"Then," begged Mr. Pontifex, still with his affectation of shrewd simplicity, "do you mind placing your weapon before you, where I can see it? I will do the same with mine."



He pulled the trigger and a shot rang out.

Edwin Prior shook with merriment, but he drew out a revolver and laid it by him. The lawyer scanned it eagerly—it was the facsimile of that which he was so artfully screening with his coat-sleeve as he bent across the round table to commence the game for which he had been preparing.

"Now, sir," he said impressively; "I will come to my client's message. I am empowered to guarantee you the whole of his fortune, less the cost of realising it, in purchase of a certain cheque which you have in your possession."

"And what may Dick Norris, on his own confession, be worth?" inquired the other mockingly.

"In gross, four hundred thousand pounds," said the

Digitized by Google

lawyer; "on a forced realisation not more than three hundred thousand."

"Three hundred thousand cents!" scoffed Edwin Prior; "why, he is known to have three or four million dollars, at any rate, over seven hundred thousand pounds. My price is six hundred thousand pounds in tip-top securities properly assigned, and if I don't get it I'll treat the States to a sensation forgery trial."

"Man, have you no compassion?" said the solicitor sternly; "can you not understand that Mrs. Norris, the reason for whose generous crime you know only too well, is here to plead for mercy. You once loved her—do you not see that she is ill with terror?"

There was a long and shuddering sigh, and Mabel Norris, who had started up convulsively, fell heavily to the floor. Prior rose hurriedly and stooped over her—there was a curious alarm in his mean face. Mr. Pontifex comprehended his thought. If Mabel Norris were dead the chief part of his hold on her husband would be gone. Edwin Prior knelt down, anxiously gazing at the pale features.

"Support her while I send for some brandy," desired the lawyer, and went to the bell. In that movement he found time—unnoticed—to change the revolvers. As he did not do more than imitate the operation of sounding the bell, no response was made.

"There, there," he said briskly, rejoining the pretended invalid; "it is nothing serious, Mr. Prior, a simple fainting fit, I am sure."

The amateur actress accepted the hint and recovered forthwith. The relieved blackmailer aided the lawyer to lift her upon the sofa.

"After all, Mab," he mumbled, "I don't want to be hard on you. I'll take three hundred thousand, if this attorney of yours will hurry up with the settlement. I can't say better than that, can I?"

Mr. Pontifex returned to his seat at the table.

"One thing further, Mr. Norris;" he said, "I wish to be satisfied that this cheque of yours is the real article in dispute, and not some worthless substitute which will allow you to harass us again with the threatened production of the original."

Edwin Prior hauled out a bulky letter-case, and fished up a soiled slip of paper with a ragged edge. Mr. Pontifex extended his hand.

"Not much!" laughed the blackmailer. The lawyer shook his head. "I must be permitted to inspect it thoroughly," he said; "you can cover me if you choose with that pop-gun of yours."

Edwin Prior did so and surrendered the cheque.

"Is this the genuine thing, Mrs. Norris?" queried Mr. Pontifex. The pretty Californian went to his side, with simulated unsteadiness, and, blushing deeply, identified the cheque, which, three years since, she had so romantically forged. The solicitor waited till she had gone back to the sofa and then, grasping the cheque very conspicuously between his thumbs and fingers, tore it—one, twice, thrice.

A spasm of anger distorted the blackmailer's countenance—he pulled the trigger of the weapon he was levelling and a shot rang out, another and another succeeded, yet, to the marksman's utter consternation, Mr. Pontifex was able smilingly to complete the destruction of the cheque. Having reduced it to fragments he put them in his mouth and swallowed them. But before that process was concluded Edwin Prior found himself looking into the muzzle of his own revolver which Mr. Pontifex wielded scientifically while he explained the apparent miracle that had occurred.

"Pray waste no more of my blank cartridges, Mr. Prior," he said blandly, "especially as I hear footsteps on the stairs. If you keep your countenance and leave unchallenged the trifling fibs your shots will compel me to invent, I will promise that you shall not be the poorer for your discretion."

The door was flung open as Mr. Pontifex slipped the loaded revolver into his pocket and turned to apologise to the excited landlady.

"My friend was exhibiting a favourite pistol," he said soothingly, "when it dropped to the floor, and, being loaded, the shock discharged several of the chambers. That is so, is it not, Mr. Prior?" And his singular eyes met those of the blackmailer so significantly that Edwin faltered "Yes."

* * * * *

Richard Norris retained his fortune and his wife her good name. As for Edwin Prior, he received back the amount of his forged cheque with compound interest and a munificent bonus, which generosity so touched him that he admitted his plot to convict Richard Norris of embezzlement at Santa Mercia. It was he who had abstracted the money from the latter's drawer, with the object of condemning his manager to a stiff term of imprisonment.

Mr. Pontifex's superb digestion was even equal to a three-years-old cheque. But the admiring American insisted upon his taking a special fee for the performance, suggesting that it be entered up as "Perpetual Rent of Safe Deposit." And one of the great lawyer's few holidays was that in which he toured the States in luxury, the honoured guest of Mr. and Mrs. Norris.

A STRANGE MEETING.

It is not often that a well-known novelist will admit that a story that has been read and talked about in every part of the globe was moulded by him from a real personage, and on the other hand, it is a very rare occurrence for this personage to allow himself to be immortalised by a novel and yet remain good friends with the author. Such is the case, however, with Mr. Cutcliffe Hyne and Captain Kettle. The distinguished author and the prototype of the world-famous book recently met at Newcastle-upon-Tyne and conversed in the friendliest terms. They had not seen each other for a number of years.

It is interesting in connection with the above fact to note that Messrs. Pearson have just published a splendid sixpenny edition of **"The Adventures of Captain Kettle."** It is bound in a stout and attractive yellow paper cover and is turned out in style equal to a three and sixpenny novel.

The *Daily Telegraph* recently said: "The reader of fiction who has not made the acquaintance of Mr. Hyne's fascinating sea captain, is to be pitied," and there is, now, absolutely no reason why every man, woman or child should not possess a copy of this wonderful novel, as it is now issued at a sum within the reach of all and is to be obtained at every bookstall, bookseller, stationer or newsagent in the United Kingdom. Failing these, send eightpence in stamps to the publishers, and a copy will be forwarded without delay.

Digitized by Google

A JAPANESE LOVE STORY

"The only girl I ever loved."
—ANCIENT REMARK.

THE temple at the little village of Meguro, outside the town of Yedo, is celebrated as being the last scene of a highly instructive and sentimental story. The name of Meguro means "black eyes," but whether it obtained that appellation from the pugilistic habits of its people or not, I am unable to say. As France has her grave of Abelard and Heloise for young people suffering from hopeless attachments, as England has her ballad of the forsaken maid of Woodstock town, and Scotland its "Auld Robin Gray," so Japan has its magic love story of Kamarasaki and Gompachi.

On my visit to the place, I was accompanied by a gay young Japanese, in the employment of the British Minister, who spoke most excellent English, and during the drive he told me how that this was how it all happened.

In the old days, when Japan was Japan, three hundred years before the obtrusive foreign devil had come, buying up all the old Cloisonné, and making bad railways and building inferior steamboats for the government at extortionate rates; when gentlemen wore two swords sticking out of their belts, and the Mikado was a man often heard of, but seldom seen, there lived in an inland town a young man called Gompachi. He was a fine-grown young man, who had done credit to his seven or eight bowlfuls of rice and high fish per diem; and except a slight partiality for saki and knocking in late at nights, up to the time when the story commences, his parents must have had every reason to be proud of him. But even as Rob the Grinder met with his fate through his fondness for singing birds, so were dogs the rocks on which Gompachi's bark was destined to come to grief.

Dogs of all kinds he loved, but of fighting dogs it was that he considered himself especially a connoisseur. Where he found them in Japan I can't imagine, for a more pusillanimous lot, more addicted to vanishing round corners as you approach, and valiantly barking from the tops of roofs and other similar points of vantage as you retire, it would be impossible to find out of Egypt.

However, he either bred, or found, or, what is more likely, stole a dog which was able and willing to tackle any canine brother to whom he might be opposed; and Gompachi, from that time forward, began to wear coats of a noisy pattern and "obies" of a preposterous length; and other young men and their dogs got up and slid when he and his tyke were abroad; and he accumulated, by backing his animal, as many brass tempos as would fill a portmanteau, a collection amounting in value to two dollars, or, if brass happened to be up, two dollars and a half.

But one day, another well-grown young man came into the town, and was willing to make a match of it; and on the appointed day came Gompachi to the ground, leading his champion, and swaggering and rattling the tempos in his pocket, and offering odds on his favourite, as was his wont to do. His opponent was also of a speculative turn of mind, and so the bets were made and the fight commenced.

The battle was so equal and sanguinary that at length both dogs lay dead upon the ground; but before giving his final kick, very much to the appreciation of all the cats in the neighbourhood, Gompachi's dog had chawed off more than an inch of his opponent's tail, and on this ground his master claimed both the victory and the bets.

The new-comer, who, if he had lived, might evidently have become a Japanese Gladstone—refused to pay, but declared himself willing to refer the matter to arbitration, and even hinted that two other courses were open for settling the dispute.

Gompachi, however, would have none of it.

"Stump up, or I shall make you," was all he said.

"Make your mongrel disgorge that inch and a half of my dog's tail!" said the other.

Words like these in Japan can only have one ending. It was out swords and cut three times, before you could say "knife." Gompachi was one too many for the stranger upon the ground.

Then Gompachi wiped his reeking sword upon the paper handkerchief of his opponent, and took from his pocket all the small change he could find; after which he said he felt rather delicate in the chest, and

Digitized by Google

thought a little sea-air and change would be about the best thing for him.

And though for months afterwards the police kept asserting that they had received "important information" as to his whereabouts, they always failed to produce his person to the authorities.

Gompachi walked away among the hills, till at last he met with some gentlemen who earned their living by sleight-of-hand tricks on the Mikado's highways; and as he began to have cravings for two or three of his usual wash-ba infuls of rice, he gladly accepted their invitation to spend the night in their country house, which at that time consisted of a vast inaccessible cave; and thus, having finished his imitation of Rob the Grinder, he commenced a career on the model of that immoral young Spanish gentleman, Gil Blas.

The robbers had, of course, heard his tempos rattling in his pocket, and had noticed with envious eyes the silver hilt of the sword which had cut short the possibly political career of his late antagonist. But, as I have before said, he was a well-grown young man, and they thought they might as well put off the charitable task of relieving him of these articles until such time as he should be sound asleep. So they brought out the rice and the fish and the usual impossible pickles and saki, and spent a pleasant convivial evening with a slight tendency to feel muddled, till Gompachi arose, yawning mightily, and announcing his intention of placing his neck on the wooden dumb-bell which serves these people for a pillow, he went to sleep.

He was awakened in the middle of the night, not by a pain in his neck or elsewhere, but by the apparition of a beautiful young girl of fifteen summers. Writers of novels and love-tales always say "summers." Gompachi noticed, when the saki was out of his eyes, that she had a pair of the sparklingest black ones he had ever seen peeping over a fashionable fan; a profusion of long, dark hair, the neatest little sandals in the world, and a pannier as big as a haystack.

He began to hope that his queue was sticking properly forward down the middle of his head like a sign post, as the queues of Japanese exquisites should always do; and while thus thinking, a voice like rippling water told him of his danger.

"And if you please," she said, "they're sharpening their swords in the back cave at this moment, sir; and if you're not a bigger fool than you look, you'll get out of this place a great deal quicker than ever you came in, without so much as waiting to say, 'Woki-hi arrigato-ki-si-on-ara,'" which is, being interpreted, "Much obliged to you for your information, and good-night, my dear!"

But then, with want of consistency which makes her sex the ducks they are—except when arguing—she proceeded to inform him that she herself was the daughter of a wealthy old gentleman in Kigoto, who had made his money in the city, and that a few days before, when out for a moonlight ramble, she had been stolen by these robbers, who were making her cook and do for them all kinds of horrid work, which was spoiling her hands, and her figure ever so much, and made her miserable, let alone there not being a bit of polished metal in the place to do her hair by.

I will say this much for Gompachi, that he was not the kind of fellow to go sneaking off and leave her to her fate, and his next intention was the only good one I can record of him.

He whipped out his sword and posted himself outside the door, thereby ending his *rôle* of Gil Blas, and adopting that of Mr. R. Swiveller, when he aroused the singer lodger of Bevis Marks. And as the first robber put his head in, he was down upon it like a guillotine, and repeated himself like a recurring decimal as each successive robber came to look after his comrades, until he had polished off the entire dozen.

Then, possessing himself of such portable articles as took his fancy, he made the best of his way to Kigoto with the black-eyed moosmie, whose name I need scarcely inform my intelligent readers was Kamarasaki Kigotean. Belgravia made great rejoicings at the return of the missing damsel, though Mrs. Grundy, of course, had something to say about it, with unpleasant allusions to wonderful coincidences, the marines, and so on.

But her old father, who had made his fortune in Korean loans, and by floating companies for the opening of mines and other useful purposes, came out liberally, and offered Gompachi five hundred golden yen, and, what should have been of far greater value to him, the hand of the lovely Kamarasaki herself, who was now madly in love with her preserver.

Gompachi had not the slightest objection to the five hundred yen, but as to the matrimonial side of the business he was not so clear. He was not indifferent to the lady's charms, but at any rate he thought he would like to have a look round the town of Yedo before his

Before he knew where he was, the whitest arms in all Japan were round his neck.

Digitized by Google

wings were clipped. I must fear that his mind was running on fighting dogs and book-making and loud suits.

He therefore dissembled, as villains in love stories invariably do, and said that he would be glad to avail himself of the happiness in store for him, but that first it would be necessary for him to go to Yedo to transact some highly important business.

Her father, being a business man, rather liked this, and thought it augured well for the future. So Gompachi bade adieu to the sweet little Kamarasaki (the brute!) and told her in a false, flirting, kernoodling kind of way not to forget him, and that when the calls of the great commercial world ceased to press upon his anxious mind, he would return and make her Mrs. Gompachi, and never dine at his club, or have bachelor friends to dinner, or smoke in the dining room.

Then he left for Yedo with a gay heart and a large umbrella, thinking how much prettier gold yen rattle in your pocket, as you walk, than brass tempos; and the poor little girl remained behind, to pour salt tears from those bright eyes into the gold fish-pond in the back yard, and hold private rehearsals of imaginary conversations she would have with him when he returned, to no better audience than the sacred old family tortoise.

Gompachi was not destined to reach Yedo without further adventures. That habit of his of always rattling money in his pocket was, to say the least of it, vulgar; and it would be much better if the old city gent had given him a crossed cheque payable to order, and, best of all, if he had kept it for himself or his daughter.

Gompachi was still a few miles from the town when it was getting dusk one day; and though the drowsy tinkling of his gold yen might have lulled the distant folds had there been any—there are no sheep in Japan—it had a very different effect upon six highwaymen, who were looking out for work, and fell upon him tooth and nail. Gompachi, it has been, I think, conclusively proved, was no coward, and he had the heads of three of them on the ground in a twinkling; but the remainder pressed on him hard and had almost overpowered him, when the arrival of an eighth person on the scene caused them to regard flight as an eligible move.

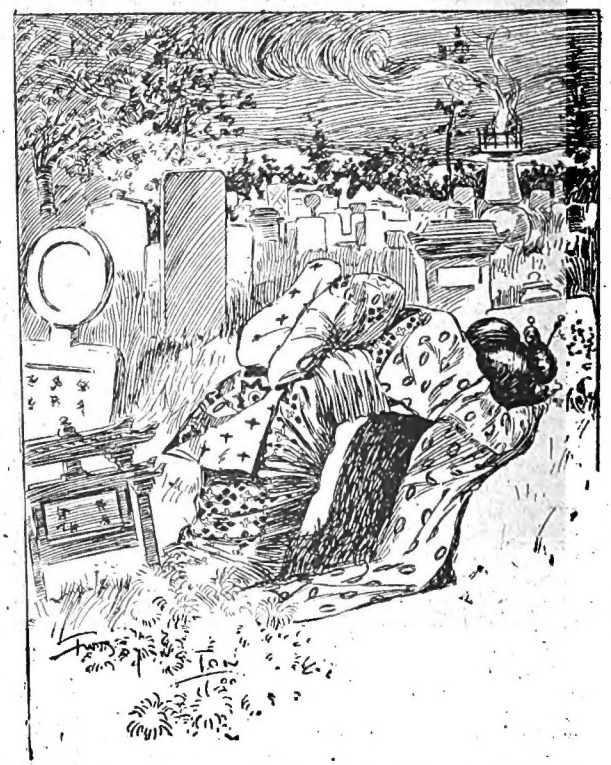
His rescuer turned out to be possessed of the name of Chobei, a wardsman of Yedo; that is to say, he was not of the Samurai, or military class, who were composed of swashbucklers like our hero, but he was an honest burgher, taking part in city affairs, such as sewers and water, and was altogether a stout, simple-hearted, honest old fellow, with more good nature than sense about him, as the sequel will fully show.

Chobei took Gompachi home with him to Yedo, and was so charmed with his manners and conversation that he begged he would continue his guest as long as he should remain in the city.

Gompachi now commenced the diligent prosecution of the important business which had so unavoidably brought him to Yedo. He went in for a regular new fit-out of the old kind of suits—large stripes and squares, with a green dragon across the chest and a pack of hounds down his back. He also bought himself several pairs of lacquered clogs, together with red umbrellas, and "obies" of an even more preposterous length than of yore.

I make no doubt that he would set up a private "juirikisha," had that very handy vehicle been invented at this epoch; as it was, he was obliged to be contented with a gorgeous "norima" or sedan-chair, like a meat-safe, which soon became well known at all the local race meetings, matches, and dog-fights; and youths in Yedo of a sporting turn began to know that they could always get the market odds from Gompachi, and that he was generally good for a quart of sakki, and any number of shovelfuls of rice, if they had the good luck to meet him after ten o'clock p.m.

How the respectable old Chobei could have stood this way of going on I can't imagine; but he appears to have endured it without a murmur, like a regular old Eli.



She flung herself on her face with a bitter cry.

His whole conduct shows his to have been a soft-hearted old fool, and he swallowed all this, and a good deal more at the back, like a boa-constrictor; for Gompachi was always knocking-in late, and must have been heard nightly by Chobei offering inarticulate invitations to the police to assist him in putting his latch-key to any practical use, and was found deep in stertorous slumbers at six in the morning in his dirty clogs upon the nice clean matting, which is the very depth of bad manners in Japan.

He was also a regular attendant at the theatres, and was to be found in the green rooms, chucking the actresses under the chin, and calling them by their Christian, or rather their Pagan, names, and accompanying them home to the Yoshiwara after the opera was over and standing suppers regardless of expense.

About this time it was rumoured among the fashionable Yedoeans that a most lovely and accomplished actress had come to the Yoshiwara, and would act the following week at the Yedoean Covent Garden of the

Digitized by Google

period, it being positively her first appearance upon any stage.

And numerous bets having been given and taken as to the colour of her eyes and hair, Gompachi, who, you may have observed, never allowed shyness to stand in the way of business or pleasure, thought he would look round on the sly and see her previous to taking a few bets on the subject; and accordingly he called one afternoon and sent up his card, a flimsy piece of paper the size of a handkerchief, with his name printed in the centre, like the wards of a beer-cellar key.

As he stood near the door, with his red umbrella in full bloom to shelter him from a possible dose of cold water which he fully expected would be sent him as a present from the top-story window, he was, greatly to his surprise, immediately admitted, and before he knew where he was, the whitest arms in all Japan were round his neck, the prettiest face was buried in his bosom, and the brightest blackest eyes in the world were pouring salt tears of joy all over the green dragon and loud stripes that decorated his manly chest.

Need I explain that the owner of all these was none other than the foolish, daring, little, loving, peerless Kamarasaki? Yes, she it was who now sat with her small, white hand in the great, splodgy paw of this vulgar unfaithful brute, who had never so much as given a thought for months and months to the pearl which had been placed so gratuitously beneath his feet. Little by little her story came out.

She had nearly filled up the gold-fish pond with her tears, and had talked the sacred old family tortoise into his grave a thousand years or so before his time. Then she had noticed a change steal over the temper of her father. From being an easy-going, pleasant, old papa he had become each week more scruffy and aggravating, till one day he came home early, and sending his best clogs crashing through the paper window, he had calmly announced that the little game in the city was all up.

The Corean loan had been repudiated, and he had held on too long in the bubble companies, and was hoist with his own petard. To extricate himself from these difficulties, he had imported a cargo of Chinese nutmegs, which unfortunately for him had all turned out to be wooden ones.

In a word, he was completely ruined, and could not pay three tempos in the yen; and at last things turned out so bad that his daughter, little Kamarasaki, had been obliged to come to Yedo and take a theatrical engagement to keep the family from starvation.

Gompachi, being one of those plausible fellows who could have talked the pigtail off a Chinaman, soon made it all square with poor little Kamarasaki, who had finished by mildly reproaching him, as well she might, for his cruelty and neglect. Whether any money was ever remitted to the old city gent, I am unable to say, but if so, I much fear it came out of the pockets of the little moosmie.

Gompachi swore all kinds of perjuries; and she, poor thing, got quite bewildered with the gaiety of town life to which he introduced her.

As the obi and lacquered-clog makers began to call pretty often in the mornings about this time, leaving souvenirs of their visits in the shape of summonses, it became clear that money must be had from somewhere.

Old Chobei had been squeezed quite dry, and as it never at any period of his life appears to have entered into the brain of this young man to work, Gompachi now commenced his last and most celebrated impersonation of well known characters, and this time chose Mr. Turpin as his model.

He took long, solitary walks in the country, and knocked on the head corpulent old farmers returning from market, living faster and more furiously than ever; and Kamarasaki in her innocence thought it was all right, and that the money was the fruit of legitimate business. But, to draw my story to a close, this kind of thing could not last for ever. The tenth farmer proved too much for Gompachi, and being handed over to the authorities he shortly found himself where he ought to have been long before, viz., on the execution ground above the temple of Asakusa; and soon after his head and body, in two separate pieces, adorned the highest gibbet in that place of skulls.

The soft-hearted old Chobei, instead of saying that he had long foreseen it, and that it served him right, went, like an old imbecile, and bribed the Japanese authorities—with the same ease with which, if alive, he could bribe them in the present day—to let him have the body of this "victim to circumstances"—a proceeding which all people with the odour of exclusive sanctity very strong will, no doubt, deeply deplore.

He laid the body in a grave which he dug with his own hands in the sacred ground of the shrine of Meguro, and went back sorrowing to his municipal duties and clean mats; and the tragic tale of this well-grown, immoral, young snob was soon noised abroad throughout the city, till at last it reached the ear of Kamarasaki.

Then she, poor child, arose and said never a word, but she went tripping along on her little clogs from out the gaudy Yoshiwara, and pattered away along the stone flags which lead to the temple of Asakusa, where the sacred pigeons dwell among the high eaves, and lame men offer sandals to the gods; and far beyond, she climbed the hill and crept along under the shadows of the cryptomerias that flank the path, thinking of the robbers' cave where he fought for her so well, and the happy days spent with him in her father's house, and of the loving words and kisses with which he had stolen her heart and made her life so happy; and never letting one thought cross her despairing breast of his neglect or his egregious snobbishness, or his abominable crimes, till she reached the place where her heart lay buried.

And when she got to the grave she flung herself on her face with a bitter cry, and drew the dagger which all Japanese girls keep beneath their obies, and know so well how to use; and then, kissing the new piled sods, she plunged the dagger into her breast, and the bright black eyes grew dim and glassy in death.

Then old Chobei turned up again, like an amiable undertaker, and laid them side by side, and above them he put a large stone, which remains to this day, to mark their resting place.

And all the young men of Yedo ever since who have sweethearts, and who have found that the settlements are all right, and there is no fear of the money reverting back to the family in case of their wives dying without issue, make their vows here, and plight their troth, and write beautiful couplets like those you find in Tom Smith's crackers, and twist the long strips of paper on which they are written among the branches which overshadow the tomb.

And so, lighting a comtemplative pipe, I returned to Yedo with, I am not ashamed to say, a kind thought in my heart for the memory of the faithful, soft-hearted old Chobei.

Digitized by Google

THE LION'S WARS

Our Wars With Ashanti. 1806. 1824-6. 1863-4.

ALTHOUGH the extension of the British Empire has not been accomplished without the shedding of much blood, and the squandering of much treasure, so little was known a few years ago of many of the outlying dependencies that, when we went to war with Ashanti in 1873, the thirst for information and the demand for maps could not have been greater had Ashanti been a newly-discovered country, instead of one we had had dealings with for fifty years. The Ashantis are among the worst of the savage races of Africa, and their history is stained with every imaginable crime.

Ashanti is situated in Western Africa, a little to the north of the Gold Coast, from which it is separated by an extensive country, peopled by a great variety of races. For several years before the war of 1873 broke out, the attitude of the Ashantis towards the white man had been anything but friendly, especially in the matter of encroachments in those districts of West Africa under our protection. To such lengths did these proceed, that at last we were compelled in self-defence to undertake their punishment.

Hostilities were not entered into with a light heart, for in previous wars the Ashantis had twice beaten us. Not because they were better fighters than ourselves, but because in Ashanti our soldiers had, in addition to their black foes, to fight the climate as well.

1806 was the year in which we made the acquaintance of these warlike people. One of the vassals of the king of Ashanti, a chieftain rejoicing in the name of Quacoe, had rifled the grave of a rich man for the sake of the gold ornaments buried with him. The case was laid before the British Governor, we being the suzerain power, and judgment was given against the thief.

As the sacrilegious one refused to pay the award, the chief in whose territory the despoiled grave was situated attacked the town in which the offender lived, and routed the army sent to oppose him.

But Quacoe assembled another force, fought a battle, and won a victory. Finding amongst the booty some valuable Ashanti gold swords and a hatchet, he carried them off.

On hearing of this, the king at once declared war.

Greatly alarmed, Quacoe sought refuge with the Fantees, who, on being ordered to give him up, refused.

When the Governor of Cape Coast Castle, and Governor White of the fort in the Annamaboes country, were informed that the rebel and his allies were supported by the Braffoes and the Annamaboes, and that the king's forces were only fifteen miles from the sea, they naturally became greatly alarmed.

Having defeated his enemies, the king of Ashanti took up his abode in an old Dutch fort.

The Governor now proposed that hostilities should cease, and that the king should return to his dominions.

But the Ashantis having obtained a foothold on the coast, a position they had long coveted, were in no mood to retire, and point blank dared Governor White to interfere.

Although the British garrison numbered only twenty-five, the Governor insisted, as a preliminary, that hostilities should cease.

Digitized by Google

Had this functionary not devoted his whole time to trading with the natives, he would by 1806 have learnt something of the Ashanti character, and probably have shrunk from offending so warlike a people.

Fortunately the walls of his fort were high and strong enough to resist the howling black mob who, maddened with lust of blood and excess, now clamoured for white victims.

The garrison during the next twenty-four hours had to endure over thirty assaults. All of these they repulsed. When their numbers were reduced to eight they sent out a flag of truce. As the Ashantis had lost over 3,000 men they received our messenger most graciously. The terms of peace were not difficult to arrange, owing to the king having conceived the idea that as the English monarchs had beaten all his enemies, and the king of Ashanti had done the same with his, the two kings George III. and himself must greatly resemble each other.

Our second war with these people was not only more prolonged but far more disastrous than the first. We began it rashly, and carried it on with supreme contempt for our foes, till they beat us, for beat us they did, and that most thoroughly.

In January, 1824, Sir Charles McCarthy having (with a supreme disregard for all risk) decided that the Ashantis must be crushed, determined to invade their country and reduce them to submission. Placing one half of his army under the leadership of Major Chisholm, he marched at the head of the other into the interior.

His journey was anything but a promenade. The savages hung on his flank till he approached the country he purposed subduing. Suddenly his path was barred by 10,000 Ashanti braves. A desperate fight followed. So long as we kept up our fire the Ashantis remained on the opposite side of the river which separated the two forces, but as soon as it slackened they swarmed across, greatly terrifying our black allies, who fell back in a panic. Some English militia, all yokels to a man, refused to retire although ordered to do so. To these brave fellows belongs the doubtful honour of having killed the greatest number by the bayonet in any battle. It is calculated that in the charge of the Ashantis after they crossed the river every militiaman killed four.

When the charges finished, the lads from the country removed the bayonets, left their muskets on the ground and dashed into the middle of the Ashantis bringing the average up to eight.

The art and practices of warfare being of savage origin, the strategy of coloured races is frequently better than our own. When the lads from the plough, wearied of slaughter, commenced to retreat, they found, on reaching Secondee, a large force of the enemy armed with long knives planted in their path. The struggle which ensued beggars description.

The bayonet was more than a match for the knife, but the Ashantis had received such reinforcements that our position soon became desperate.

Breaking through our ranks, the progress of the foe could be followed by the headless corpses of our men.

Overwhelmed by numbers, the few survivors fled, but, being overtaken, a massacre followed in which nearly all the officers, including Sir C. McCarthy, were killed.

Two days later the numbers of the little band were reinforced by the remnant of Major Chisholm's force, which had suffered severely. Of the entire force associated with this miserably conducted expedition, only a handful survived, our losses being eighty-four natives and 168 British.

After a lull of three weeks the Ashanti forces advanced to within five miles of Cape Coast Castle. Seeing his danger, Colonel Sutherland, who was now in command, had all the houses intervening between the fort and the bush pulled down.

Grave as was the peril, the Colonial Office evinced no alarm.

In May, 1824, however, the garrison at Cape Coast Castle was increased to 316 rank and file. In July, the Ashantis, hearing that still further reinforcements were on their way from England, determined to attack us before they could arrive.

Owing to a perfectly fanatical weakness of Colonel Sutherland for dividing his forces we were unable for months to gain any advantage over the foe.

In 1826 however, we took a terrible revenge. Stationing the bulk of the native force in the centre with a few British to stiffen them, the two wings consisting of British, Dutch and Danish, the officer in command swung his men round, completely enveloping the Ashanti army. The guns were then got to work and the savages were mowed down in thousands. It was a complete victory, and ended in our capturing the Ashanti camp. To the horror of our troops, one of the trophies which fell into our hands proved to be the head of Sir Charles McCarthy. The Ashantis lost over 5,000 warriors and a number of chiefs; our losses were also heavy, 800 dead and 1,600 wounded with knives.

After this the Ashantis remained quiet till 1864. Two slaves in 1863 escaped from Ashanti to our territory and on our refusing to deliver them up the king dispatched an army for their recovery. Strange to say, the public got to hear of this war before it was over. Although strongly disapproved of, reinforcements were sent which arrived in time to enable us to drive the Ashantis back. Then a small force under Couren marched into the Ashanti country. Why they did so is not known, but they did, and having arrived there marched back again. Our losses on the return journey were enormous, and we had to bury the guns on the road to prevent their falling into the hands of the enemy.

This ended the war of 1863-4 and the Ashantis remained quiet till 1873, when, without a word of warning, they suddenly invaded the territory of the Assim tribe. The chiefs applied to us for assistance; but although the Colonial Office must have known that to refuse our protection would be interpreted by the savages as a sign of weakness, we gave them to understand that we should only defend ourselves.

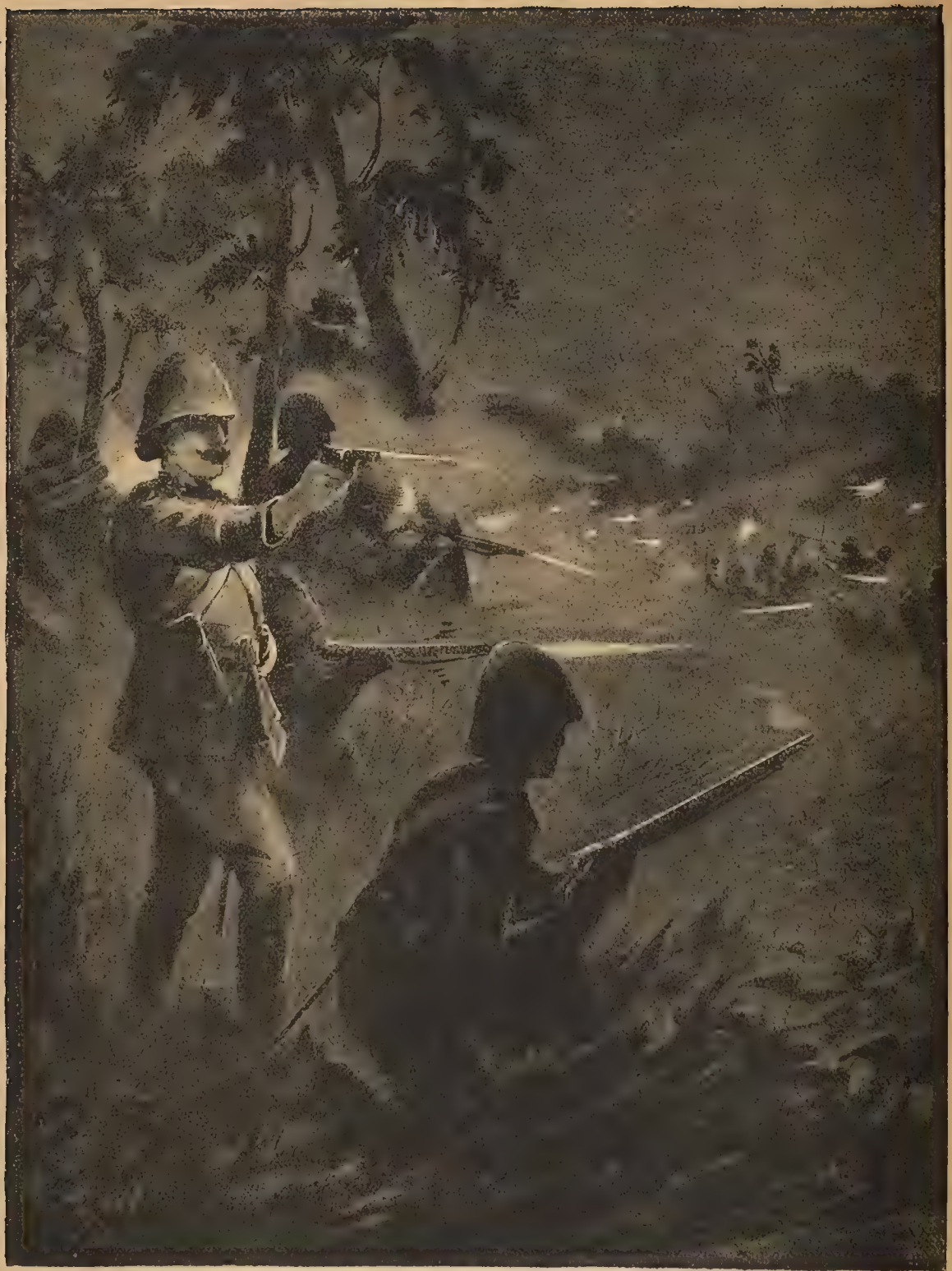
This greatly elated the Ashantis. We, the strong white man who just before had taken over the territory of the Elmini from the Dutch now declared that the native tribes must not look to Great Britain for protection.

By the time the Ashanti army had reached the coast we reversed our policy and besought the natives, especially the Fantees, to fight. After much persuading the Fantees consented to be led against their old foes, and after a battle which lasted the entire day defeated them.

A week later they attacked again, but, being poorly supplied with ammunition, were presently compelled to retreat. The Ashantis pressing on, the retreat became a rout, and the Fantees, having had enough fighting, dispersed.

By February our position became so precarious that the Government hastily dispatched some troops. In the meantime the Elmini, having joined the Ashantis,

Digitized by Google



Drawn by In the middle of the night they attacked. [Lawson Wood.

Google

proceeded to raid the country round the forts. In June, however, they came into collision with some marines which had just arrived.

Although their advance was severely checked, the climate so soon thinned the ranks of our men that they boldly laid siege to Elmini fort, a formidable structure, built in 1481 by the adventurous Portuguese, from whom it was taken by the Dutch in 1657. As the fort was protected by no fewer than ninety guns, which, although old-fashioned, were powerful enough to keep the savages at bay, time was given for the dilatory authorities to send out more troops.

As soon as it was known in this country that war was inevitable there was a loud outcry. The prophecies of failure were so persistent that, had not the conduct of the expedition been confided to an officer who possessed in an unusual degree the confidence of the nation, its abandonment would have been certain.

The army which was to capture Coomassie, the capital of Ashanti, consisted of some 4,000 men, and included sailors, marines, engineers and artillery. Sir Garnet Wolseley who controlled operations, was in no hurry to commence business. The Ashantis to the number of over 40,000 were devastating the country, but as much depended on the steadiness of the native troops the expedition did not start till his black allies had been thoroughly drilled.

The preparations being at last completed, the British force plunged into the vast primeval forest and made for the Ashanti capital. Up hills, the difficulty of which was increased by dense undergrowth, down into swamps where the air was heavy with the germs of fever, across rolling plains and broad deep rivers, the troops, marching in four columns, toiled on.

The enemy commenced to dispute our advance at Borborassi. Driven out of the village and back into the bush, the savages assailed the sailors on their flank, but were quickly beaten off and chased to such a distance by the irate tars, that the army had to wait till they returned. When the march was resumed the Ashantis made another rear attack on the tars, but the number of Snider bullets which found a home in their ranks was so great that in all future encounters they kept as far from the naval brigade as possible.

Impeded by the rank luxuriance of an equatorial vegetation, the rate of progress would have been alarmingly slow but for the good work done by the engineers, who, protected by strong guards, marched in front making the roads as they went.

At Amoaful we encountered an enormous force evidently prepared to prevent, if possible, the capture of the capital. As the safety of the army depended on the coming battle, Sir Garnet neglected no precaution. He disposed his forces in four columns, Col. Evelyn Wood being in command of the one on the right, having with him Sir Garnet himself. As the Ashantis understood the art of war, the safety of the rear was handed over to Colonel Warren.

At about eight o'clock in the morning Lord Gifford's scouts came in touch with the enemy. The Highlanders at once went to the front, and the fighting soon became general. When the right came into action the Ashantis massed a heavy force and hurled it at Evelyn Wood's column with such fury, that had not Sir Garnet hurried off for the Welsh Fusiliers Wood's men must have given way.

As soon as it was certain that the rear was not threatened, Sir Garnet sent for the Rifle Brigade to drive the enemy from some dense bush, the friendly cover of which enabled them to keep up a most destructive fire. The moment the Rifles began to edge round, the savages, alarmed for their communication, stole swiftly away and joined in an attack on the left. Then for the second time there seemed a chance of our being defeated.

Towards evening, Essamanquatia, the cleverest of the Ashanti generals, suddenly appeared with a strong reinforcement, and, seeing at a glance how matters were progressing, fiercely attacked the already sorely pressed left.

Fortunately, the Rifles had seen the savages they had dislodged from the scrub making for their right, and suspecting their intention they moved swiftly across the left, coming up just in time to hurl back the new attack.

But it was the 2nd West Indians who turned the tide of battle. The wily savages, although they were driven from the field, had plenty of fight left in them. The moment they reached the bush they rushed off to Eusarpe, where we had stationed a detachment two miles away. They charged the intrenchments which the little garrison had taken the precaution to construct repeatedly till midnight, and then sullenly retired.

In the middle of the night they attacked Quarman, a small place where some of the troops had bivouacked, but something of the sort being anticipated they were repulsed with terrific loss.

This crowning disaster, coming after twenty hours' hard fighting, so discomforted them that they fled.

During the day the Ashantis had over 15,000 warriors fighting. Including the losses incurred during the night attacks the whole was reduced to 12,000.

On the following day Sir Garnet pushed on a flying column, which attacked and captured, after a stout resistance, the town of Becquah. As soon as it was destroyed the troops resumed their march on Coomassie.

The Ashantis then prepared a number of most cleverly-contrived ambuscades on our line of march, but Sir Garnet, being a general with brains, cleared them in advance.

The crossing of the river Ordah led to another fiercely-contested battle, but the determined bravery of the British soldier was not to be denied, for although the Ashantis now contested every mile of our advance we still drew nearer and nearer to our destination. Village after village, Ordahon, Eusleyan, Korsi, all were stormed, the Ashantis being beaten back, despite the encouragement afforded by their sovereign, who had now joined them; for King Coffee, though a poor warrior, was greatly beloved by his troops on account of his cruelty.

To discount the advantage of their monarch's presence, Sir Garnet left the attacking to be done by the Highlanders, who, anxious to get the business over, rushed villages and ambuscades in the most reckless manner.

On February 4th we entered Coomassie. The troops were greatly impressed by the imposing proportions of the capital.

The main street was over a mile and a half long and seventy yards wide, the city itself being over three miles and a half round.

Instead of huts we found to our astonishment houses with alcoves and stuccoed facades embellished with Mauresque patterns, the effect being heightened by painting the upper part of the house white and the lower part red.

Digitized by Google

The Ashantis may have been savages, but at least one of their class distinctions greatly resembled our own. The servants of the nobility and gentry lived apart, the passages connecting the different offices being all lined with closets and store rooms.

"Civilised," said the soldiers after inspecting the Ashanti kitchens.

"Savages," they declared when they came on the Death Grove and noticed some forty bodies in various stages of corruption; and savages the Ashantis are.

In 1873 it was quite a common thing for 300 slaves to be killed at one time, when any calamity, such as the death of a king's sister, occurred. Considering that over 1,000 were put to death annually in Coomassie, the people must have been an exceptionally prolific lot.

The palace of King Coffee was measured by a curious Highlander, and found to be 500 feet square. One portion of the building was actually made of stone, the rest was stuccoed.

The tastes of monarchs, like those of lesser mortals differ.

Those of the monarch of Ashanti inclined towards elephants' tails, ivory horns, rusty cutlasses, and sabres, worn-out guns bound round with clips of gold, and war drums well-bespattered with blood. No opposition was offered us as we entered the city. No one molested us, the Ashanti warriors grinned pleasantly at the Highlanders and were very communicative till we asked to see their king, then they froze.

Sir Garnet sent a message by one of the chiefs saying that, now Great Britain had proved her strength, he wished to spare the town if the Ashantis would make peace at once and agree to pay a small indemnity, the amount of which should be fixed later. The chief conveyed the message but the king still remained in hiding.

When Sir Garnet learnt that Ashanti politics exclude all honest dealing, and that treaties are made to be broken, it became clear that nothing was to be gained by negotiation; so as a mark of our power and our ability to punish any future acts of aggression, and, above all, to lessen, if not destroy, the prestige of the Ashantis, the palace and city were ordered to be destroyed by fire.

A few sentimentalists in this country professed to be extremely angry over the burning of Coomassie. They were wrong, for it was a most beneficent act. The Ashanti government was atrocious, their capital was a charnel house, their religion a consummation of cruelty and treachery, their policy was even worse than their religion, and they were a terror to their feebler neighbours.

Just as the troops were about to start on their homeward march King Coffee put in an appearance. Discretion being the better part of valour he thought it would be as well to open negotiations. At Fornangah a treaty was signed by which King Coffee bound himself to pay by instalments an indemnity of 50,000 ounces of pure gold towards defraying our expenses in the war.

He also guaranteed freedom of trade between Ashanti and Great Britain. His majesty also agreed to discontinue the practice of human sacrifices.

The treaty signed the troops started on their march back. The coast was reached on February 22nd, and the soldiers at once started for England.

[*Next week:* **The New Zealand War.**]

Short Stories That . . . . Make You Laugh.

The Prize of One Guinea for the best Storyette has been won this week by Miss Annie Jackson, 5 Sutherland Street, Sheffield, for the Storyette entitled "Bringing the Whole Force."

Bringing the Whole Force.

A well-known professor at one of our universities was often annoyed by two Italians playing a street organ before his house.

Giving his servant some money, he told her that whenever she heard an organ she was to go out and pay the owners to take it away.

This was a failure. The men, instead of coming once a week, came twice.

One day, the sound of the organ disturbed the professor while working at one of his lectures.

This so annoyed him that he rushed out and ordered the men away, telling them that if they came again he would hand them over to the police.

They refused to go unless he gave them money.

Enraged at their impertinence, he raced down the street in search of a policeman. Just as he turned the corner of the street he met a sergeant marching nine constables to their beats. Without speaking, he turned and walked alongside the procession.

When they turned the corner the Italians saw the professor with the policemen. It was enough. They were both seized with a sudden desire to see how quickly they could get the organ out of the street.

The cure was lasting, for the professor declares that no one has since been bold enough to play an organ before his house.

A. J.

Those Rationals.

Scene.—An American Court of Justice.

"Which is the plaintiff in this case?"

The plaintiff: "I am the plaintiff, your honour."

The judge: "I thought the wife was the plaintiff."

The plaintiff: "I am the wife, your honour."

The judge: "The dickens you are!"

The plaintiff: "I trust your honour entertains no prejudice against the habiliments of the new woman?"

The judge: "I! certainly not, at the same time I feel it my duty to inform you that you don't stand the ghost of a show with the jury!"

The plaintiff: "Why not?"

The judge: "Because they are all married men."

Shrill voice from the jury box: "You're off judge, four of us are married women!"

A. K. R.

He Met His Match.

A certain well-known railway contractor has the reputation of looking after the minor details of his great business with a keen eye. One morning, while

Digitized by Google

out inspecting the work that was being done on a railway, he picked up a stray bolt lying by the side of the line. Then he walked to where the men were working.

"Look here," he called out to one of the workmen, "how is it that I find bolts lying about wasted? I have to pay for these things, you know."

"Why, where did you get that, sir?"

"I found it a little way up the line here."

"Oh, did you?" cried the workman. "I'm much obliged to you, sir, for I've been hunting for that bolt all the forenoon. I knew there was one missing!"

The august contractor concluded that he could give that workman no points on economy, and left in silence.

D. P. R.

Under Ten.

A CIRCUS paid a flying visit to a small northern town not long ago, and the price of admission was sixpence, children under ten years of age half-price.

It was Edith's tenth birthday, and her brother Tom, aged thirteen, took her in the afternoon to see the show. Arrived at the door he put down ninepence, and asked for two front seats.

"How old is the little girl?" asked the money-taker doubtfully.

"Well," replied Master Tom, "this is her tenth birthday, but she was not born until later than this in the afternoon."

The money-taker accepted the statement and handed him the tickets, but it was a close shave.

E. F. C.

A Double Joke.

A SMART man slapped down a five-shilling piece upon the counter of a restaurant in the City the other day as if he were angry.

"Look here, sir," he growled, "I don't often complain of the food that's served me, but that pepper of yours is half peas."

"I beg your pardon," replied the landlord. "You must be mistaken; I buy that pepper whole and grind it myself."

"I don't care a hang about that, sir! I repeat it is half peas."

"Oh! very well, if you say so. There's no need to quarrel over the matter. Still, I'd like to see you prove it," said the landlord calmly.

"Well, sir. I prove it this way—pepper—p-e-p-p-e-r—half p's. See?"

"Oh! yes," said the other, "it's a joke. Ha, ha! That's great! Best I ever heard! Your change, sir; thank you. Ha, ha! Splendid joke."

"Oh! it isn't half bad, but you have given me sixpence short."

"I think not, sir. We charge sixpence extra for peas. Rather out of season, you know, this time of the year!"

R. C.

Good Farming.

"SAMBO, is your master a good farmer?"

"Oh, yes, massa fust-rate farmer—he makes two crops in one year."

"How is that, Sambo?"

"Why, he sells all this hay in de autumn, and makes money once; den in de spring he sell de hides of de cattle dat die for want of de hay, and makes money twice."

T. J. W.

Not Quite Clear.

A YOUNG soldier who had just joined his regiment in India, met an old chum, who had been out there some time, and asked if India was as bad as it was painted in England.

"Oh, no," said his chum, "not at all. The fact of the matter is, there's a lot of young fellows come out here that don't take proper care of themselves; they eat and they drink, and they sleep and they die, and then they write home and tell their friends it's the climate that's killed them."

A. H.

Two Reasons.

THE latest device of a Paris paper for attracting readers is the engagement of two eminent physicians to attend gratuitously upon its yearly subscribers.

Recently the manager of the paper gave notice to one of the physicians "not to prescribe for X. any more; his subscription has expired."

The doctor replied:

"So has X."

C. F.

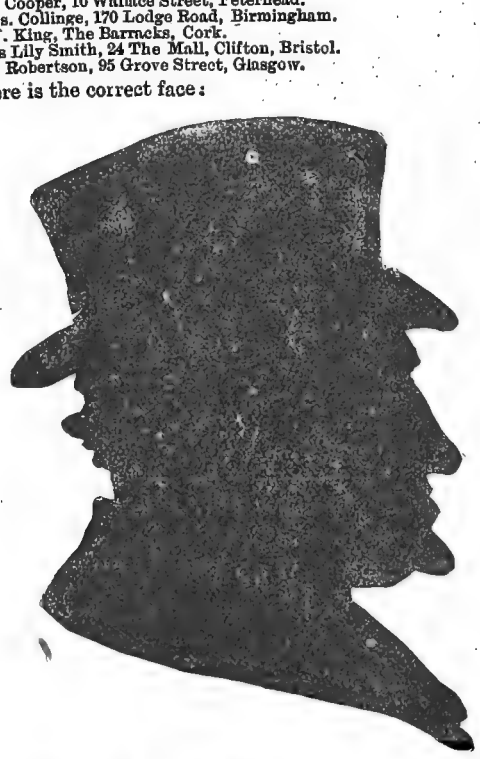
RESULT OF THE "FITTING FACE" COMPETITION.

THE first prize of £1 1s. has been awarded to MR. DONALD ROBERTSON, of 95 Grove Street, Glasgow, whose attempt was the most accurate sent in.

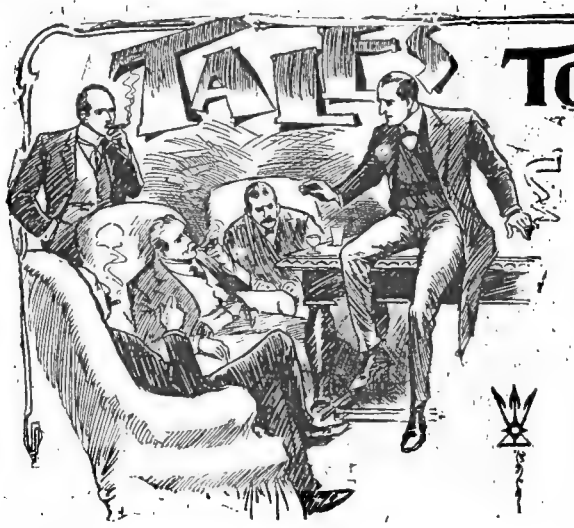
A copy of the "Maori Maid" has been sent to each of the following:

R. Williamson, 56 Prince Street, Peterhead.
F. Williamson, 56 Prince Street, Peterhead.
W. Sinclair, 53 Longate, Peterhead.
D. Cooper, 10 Wallace Street, Peterhead.
Jas. Cooper, 10 Wallace Street, Peterhead.
Thos. Collinge, 170 Lodge Road, Birmingham.
A. J. King, The Barracks, Cork.
Miss Lily Smith, 24 The Mall, Clifton, Bristol.
Jas. Robertson, 95 Grove Street, Glasgow.

Here is the correct face:



Digitized by Google



Told off Duty.

[You probably don't know the "Stand-Easy" Club. It isn't in the directory, and you might live next door to the place for years without knowing of its existence by that name. It isn't a conventional club; there is no subscription, and there is no register of members. It is merely a room in a quiet, orderly, and select hostelry in Westminster, where, by common consent, a number of officials of all kinds meet when "off duty." There you may find detectives from Scotland Yard, near by; firemen, commissionaires, a soldier or two, and maybe a doctor from St. Thomas' Hospital or elsewhere. A motley crowd they would be if they wore their uniforms, but at the "Stand-Easy" uniforms are a rarity, "mufti" being the unwritten rule. The result is a gathering of quiet, well-behaved, and well-dressed men. Saturday night is the time when one sees the biggest muster, for then it is the custom for one member to regale the company with a story, the story being, as a rule, an account of some incident in the teller's own career.]

Sweetbriar's "National."

Told by the EX-JOCKEY.

ALTHOUGH unmistakably "horsey" in dress and appearance, there is little about old Nat Dogget to suggest that he was at one time a professional jockey. For Nat is of average height, and more than average weight, tipping the beam, as he does, at fifteen-stone odd.

Let it at once be said, however, that Nat Doggett was never a flat-race jockey. His public appearances in the saddle were strictly confined to sport "between the flags"—*i.e.*, steeplechasing; in which branch of horse-racing, of course, the burdens by the equine competitors are on an altogether higher scale than those which the fliers of the "flat" are called upon to carry. Hence, it isn't at all necessary to be a pigmy, in order to earn a lining as a professional "cross-country" rider. A man of ten stone, or thereabouts, is as well adapted for the business—rather better, in fact—than a puny mannikin who has to carry a lot of "dead weight" in his saddle-cloths. As old Doggett often declared, "Every pound o' lead tells as much on a hoss as a pound an' a half o' livin' flesh an' blood. Why, I can't profess to tell, but 'tis so."

It is many years ago since Nat relinquished the saddle and started business as a job-master in London. Nowadays his son practically runs the business for him, although Nat still persists in showing up at the "yard" for a few hours daily. Being a widower, he often spends an evening at the club, with the frequenters of which the cheery, ruddy-faced old fellow is remarkably popular.

"Did any of you ever hear the story of Sweetbriar's 'National'?" remarked Nat, when, on a recent evening, he was asked to entertain the company with a yarn. "No? Well, I ain't surprised at that; for though the race caused a bit of a sensation at the time, I don't suppose more than half-a-dozen people ever knew the real facts o' the affair.

"Sweetbriar, I may tell you, was trained by John Farrant, one o' the cleverest cross-country trainers of his day. I was a raw youngster o' fifteen when I got a job in his stable, and not till I'd had several years' hard practice, ridin' exercise, and schoolin'-gallops, was I allowed to have the leg-up in a real race. That mount was a winnin' one, and afore the end o' the season I'd quite a string o' wins to my credit.

"But though I got plenty o' mounts from other stables, I still stuck to my old master, the owners for whom he trained havin' first claim on my services. Durin' the 'off' season, I made old Farrant's place my headquarters, and rode his horses in their gallops the same as I'd done when I was only a stable lad. Farrant's wasn't a big establishment, but it was a select one; for old John was a trifle particular who he trained for, and the horses under his charge generally had a bit o' class about 'em.

"At the time I'm speakin' of, we had a bay mare called Sweetbriar, of whom great things were expected. She was a rare-bred 'un, and though she hadn't proved o' much account on the flat, looked like makin' somethin' out o' the common at the jumping game. As a five-year-old she'd won half-a-dozen little steeplechases off the reel; after which her owner, Mr. Frank Lindley, decided to put the mare aside until the next year, and then have a cut in for the Grand National with her.

"So Sweetbriar was entered, and, as the handicapper only gave her 10st. 12lb., which was rather less than we'd expected, Farrant started preparin' her for the big race. As I could do the weight comfortable, I was promised the mount. I rode the mare in her gallops, and, if at first I hadn't thought a great deal of her chance against such animals as she was to meet, I soon held a very different opinion. For not only could Sweetbriar go fast and stay for ever, as the sayin' is, but she jumped as clever as a cat, and I never knew her to put a foot wrong.

"Mr. Lindley, the owner, came over from his place three or four mornings a week, and well pleased he was at the way his mare was gettin' through her preparation. 'We shall win!' he said to me one morning as I was dismountin' after a three-mile spin over fences.

Digitized by Google

'We shall win, Doggett; the mare's a certainty!' 'Bar accidents,' I replied; 'I fancy she will myself, sir.' 'Oh! she'll stand up safe enough,' says Mr. Lindley; 'I don't believe you could pull her down wi' ropes! Yes, we shall win—I'm confident we shall win!'

"Yet, in spite of his speakin' so cocksure, I couldn't help noticin' the terribly anxious look there was on his face. He was only a young man—hardly thirty—and he'd married Miss Lucy Calton, daughter of Sir Peter Calton, one o' the leadin' men in the county, though precious poor for a baronet. The girl didn't bring Frank Lindley any dowry; but he didn't mind that, he was only too glad to take her for herself alone. You see, he was pretty comfortably off, havin' succeeded to his father, old Squire Lindley's, money and estates when he came of age.

"'Twas well known at the time o' the marriage that Miss Lucy had chosen him against Sir Peter's wishes, the old baronet favourin' a certain Captain Denny, who, on retirin' from the Army, had become connected wi' a very cute racing stable, and made a pile o' money on the Turf. This chap Denny was very much 'gone' on Miss Calton, and between him and Frank Lindley there were several scenes. Once, in the huntin' field, the Captain struck the other with his crop, and the young squire had retaliated with interest. A few days after this quarrel, Lindley's engagement to Miss Lucy was announced, whereupon Captain Denny packed up his traps and left Sir Peter's house, swearin' he'd be revenged on Lindley for havin' put him out o' the runnin'. He never visited the baronet again, and you can bet he wasn't invited to the weddin', which came off a few months afterwards.

"Well, for a couple o' years Mr. Lindley and his young wife was as happy as could be. Then it got about that, through the failure of some London concern in which he was interested, the young squire had lost pretty-nigh the whole of his fortune. That there was some truth in it was proved when he sold off most of his hunters and carriage-horses, and started to cut down expenses in all manner o' ways.

"This happened just about the time when Sweetbriar was startin' her preparation for the big steeplechase. Now, Mr. Lindley had never been much of a racin' man; but, like his father afore him, he liked to have one or two horses in trainin' with John Farrant, whose stables, I ought to have mentioned before, were within easy walkin' distance of the squire's place.

Presently a hand appeared through the hole.

"It rather surprised me to find Sweetbriar's owner so keen on winnin' this race, that he should come over several times a week before breakfast just to see the mare do her mornin' gallop. But at last I got to know the reason of his anxiety. It appeared that it was his money, and his money alone, which had brought Sweetbriar from 33 to 1 to less than half the price. In them days of heavy betting, it took some money to shorten the odds to such an extent a month before the race was due to be run.

"The fact was, as I afterwards learnt, that owing to his losses in the city, which I've mentioned, Mr. Frank Lindley's financial affairs were in a very rocky condition, and unless he could get hold of a large sum by a certain date, he'd be compelled to sell off everything. So he had decided to risk his all on Sweetbriar for the 'National.' If she landed the race for him, his winnings would set him on his legs again; if she failed—well, he would be a ruined man.

"The mare continued to do first rate, and her chance was lookin' rosier than ever, when, one day, about a fortnight before the race, she drifted out in the bettin' to 25 to 1. We couldn't understand it, for only the day before she had been well-backed on behalf o' the owner and stable connections at 14's. Young Mr. Lindley at once went up to London, returnin' next day, lookin' very glum and anxious.

"'I don't like the look of it,' he said to Farrant. 'My agent tells me that several of the 'cutest bookmakers are willing to lay almost any odds against our mare, and there seems to be an unlimited laying commission out for her. What d'you make of it Farrant?'

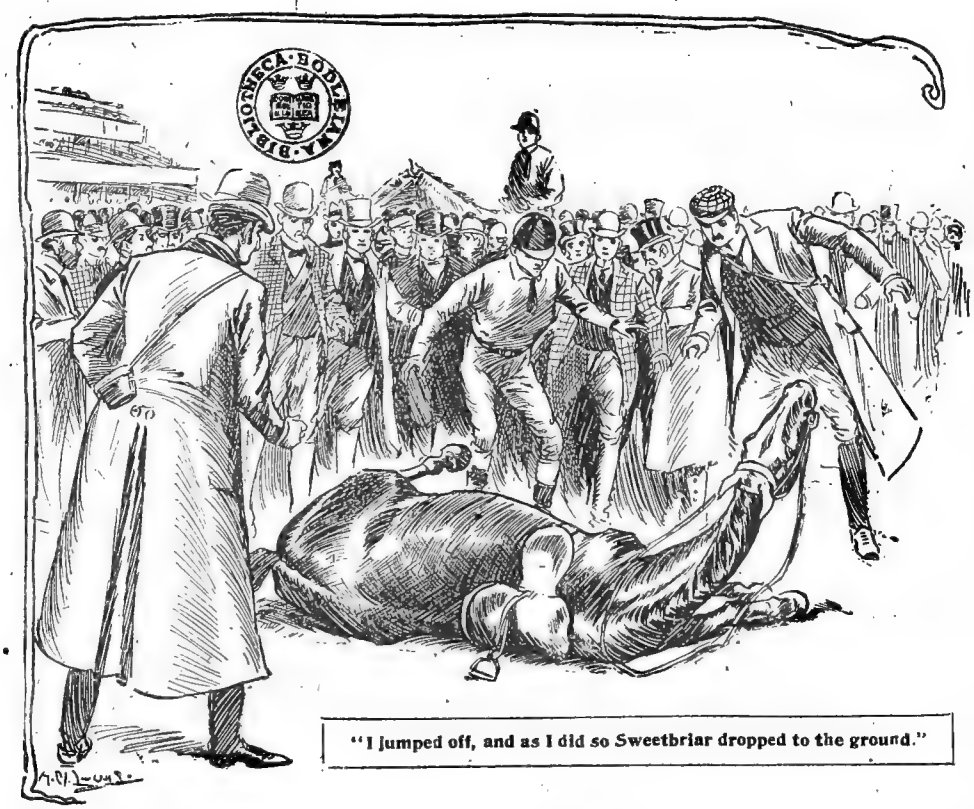
"'I don't know what to think, sir,' answered old John. 'Sweet-briar was never better in her life than she is now, and her jockey's as straight as a die. There can be only one explanation.'

"'You mean that they intend to "get at" the mare?' asked Mr. Lindley.

Digitized by Google

"'That's about the size of it, sir,' replied Farrant. 'But they shan't get at her; no, by Heaven, they shan't. Me and Nat here will take turns watchin' the mare night and day; and if I catch any scoundrel tryin' to come the nobblin' game, I'll thrash him first, and drag him through the horse-pond afterwards! Never you fear, Mr. Lindley; Sweetbriar shall go the post as fit as hands can make her, and if she don't win the Grand National, it'll be simply because she ain't good enough for the job!'

"Well, late on the very next night, while Farrant was keepin' guard over Sweetbriar in her box, he heard a noise as of somebody boring a hole through the stable wall, just above the mare's manger. Presently a hand appeared through the hole, and into the manger was dropped a bolus, about three times the size of a pea.



"I jumped off, and as I did so Sweetbriar dropped to the ground."

Old John instantly pocketed this pill, and then slipped out o' the stable, horse-whip in hand. But he was too late—the would-be nobbler had vamoosed, and though search was made for him till long past midnight, the scoundrel couldn't be found.

"After that we kept stricter watch than ever; but no more attempts were made to dose Sweetbriar, and, two days before the great race, Farrant and me took the mare to Liverpool. She was in grand fettle, and the style in which she did her winding-up gallop over part o' the course, pleased everybody who saw it. Yet she travelled worse than ever in the market, and, when the numbers went up, shouts of '25 to 1 Sweetbriar' came from all parts o' the ring.

"I cantered the mare down to the startin'-post, and when the flag fell jumped her off at a fair pace, so as to avoid the crowdin' which always takes place at the first obstacle. Sweetbriar was over it a length in front of anything else, and we were leadin' at the second fence also; but, between that and the next jump, a lightly-weighted old horse, called The Mandarin, took up the runnin'. Then, as I eased my mount a little, we were passed by several other animals, two of which, however, came a cropper at the water directly afterwards.

"For the next furlong or so, The Mandarin kept the lead, closely followed by Pacific; while Sweetbriar was about three lengths away, well clear of the others. At the 'open-ditch,' The Mandarin fell, so givin' Pacific the lead. Sweetbriar, who was sailin' along just beautiful, took off at the jump all right, but pecked a bit on landin', and very nearly unshipped me. It was the first mistake I'd known her to make, and I could only put it down to her bein' startled at the sight of a man who seemed to spring out of her way as she cleared the ditch.

"Before she'd properly righted herself, Sweetbriar was passed by Tearaway — the favourite — and three or four more. The mistake lost us at least half-a-dozen lengths; as, however, there was a matter of two miles still to go, I reckoned we had enough in hand to make up for lost ground. So shaking the mare up a bit, I sent her out after the leaders. She answered my call gamely enough, and by the time the next jump was reached, we were lyin' second again, a few lengths behind Pacific, who appeared to be goin' strong and well.

"To my surprise, Sweetbriar cleared the fence in very slovenly style, and rolled about on landin'. But on bein' righted, she sailed along all serene, and, in a few strides, recovered the ground her bad jumpin' had lost her.

"As we neared home, however, she jumped worse and worse. How I managed to hold her up and keep my seat, I don't know; but I did it somehow, and thankful I was when we brushed through the last obstacle and I saw that there was only two horses in front of us. The two were Pacific and Tearaway, who were now runnin' neck-and-neck. Sweetbriar was about a length and a half behind 'em, the others bein' a good way off.

Digitized by Google

"Well, I just touched the mare with my whip, and, taking hold of her bit, she crept up inch by inch. Suddenly Pacific dropped back beaten, leavin' the favourite to fight out the finish with Sweetbriar.

"And that *was* a finish! Runnin' as game as a pebble, my mount got level with Tearaway; then for a few strides they went on locked together, until a few yards from the winnin' post I called on Sweetbriar for a final effort, when, shooting out, she just beat the favourite by a head.

"No sooner had she passed the judge's box, than she swerved right across the course and then stood stock-still, trembling like a leaf.

"Knowin' something was wrong, I jumped off, and, as I did so, Sweetbriar dropped to the ground—dead!

* * * * *

"Mr. Lindley got a veterinary surgeon to examine the dead mare. All he discovered was a thorn embedded in her near shoulder. This thorn was dark-green in colour, and about an inch long.

"'Twas that little bit o' wood that caused poor Sweetbriar's death. For it was a poisonous thorn of a sort which grows in one particular part of India.

"How it got into Sweetbriar's shoulder we didn't know until about two months afterwards, when Mr. Lindley, one day, received by post, a packet containing a queerly-made little air-pistol and a letter.

"The letter bore no address, but the writer of it started by confessin' that he it was who had shot the thorn at Sweetbriar as she landed over the 'open-ditch.' And he it was who had previously tried to dose the mare in her stable.

"Then he went on to say that Captain Denny had promised him £500 in the event of Sweetbriar losin' the National. When the attempt to nobble the mare had failed, the Captain had given him the pistol and poisoned thorn and told him what to do with them.

"In India, where Captain Denny had lived for a time, a scratch from the thorn generally had a fatal effect on either man or beast in somethin' less than a minute. But, for some reason or other, it hadn't acted quite soon enough on poor Sweetbriar, and thus the Captain's little scheme for ruining Mr. Lindley didn't come off.

"On the other hand, Denny had lost so heavily through layin' against the mare that he couldn't, or wouldn't, settle up, and cleared out o' the country. The man he had employed to do the dirty work hadn't received a shillin' for his trouble, which was his reason for roundin' on the Captain.

"Over Sweetbriar's 'National,' Mr. Frank Lindley took a snug little parcel out o' the Ring, but never afterwards did he have any dealin's wi' the Turf. And small blame to him either!"

WON BY A WING.

By Constance Craigie Halkett.

Cyril Benson, taking him all round, was a perfectly sane man—but he was really rather mad on one point (which is, of course, believed by some people to be the case with everybody), and that point was—birds.

I don't mean that he was an amateur bird-fancier, that he kept gorgeous feathered creatures in a cage to win prizes at shows—no power on earth would have induced him to cage any bird, and he utterly despised shows and prizes, the latter because he had drawn nothing else in life's lottery.

No, it was not that. It was on the subject of women wearing birds' feathers in their hats upon which he waxed so eloquent.

He had been known to attack a royal personage—a very stiff royal personage, too—who was so taken aback by his impudence that she listened quite meekly to his observations.

A Duchess, who found him an amusing unit to invite to her house parties, was persuaded by him to insist, when visiting her milliner, that nothing but the feathers of that most unnatural of mothers, the ostrich, should ever be seen on her Grace's head—which, by the way, was rather a clever move on his part, as the said Duchess was young and good-looking, and considered by quite a large number of people as "the glass of fashion and the mould of form."

He was so well known to have this mania that no young woman with any idea of winning his regard (and there were not a few of these, for his rent-roll was large) ever dreamt of appearing before him in a wing-trimmed hat.

As to ospreys it was really better not to mention such things before him—the subject had the same effect upon him as a red rag is popularly supposed to have on a bull—though I must say, in common fairness, that the well-informed section of Society who knew the cruelty practised to obtain these ephemeral vanities cordially agreed with him on this point.

Occasionally he made a convert (as was the case with the Duchess), nearly always, of course, a member of the fair sex. This people began to find rather a bore—an extremely good-looking rich young man with a craze of this kind was one thing, but a girl who attacked everybody on the subject immediately on arriving to stay for a shooting party they found distinctly trying.

The only person who listened to her exhortations with the attention they deserved, was a young curate from the neighbourhood who had been invited to dinner.

The enthusiastic bird-lady was his partner for that meal.

As she was pretty, her words, however foolish, had of course to a male mind a certain amount of weight, and so, when she paused for want of breath, he said with fervour:

"I will join your society, only tell me what I have to do."

"There is only one condition enforced," she said impressively; "one and one only."

"And that is?" he asked eagerly.

"You must never under any circumstances whatever wear wings in your hat!" was the unexpected reply.

The curate looked completely bewildered—the company shouted with glee—but it was some moments before the enthusiastic lady realised the situation.

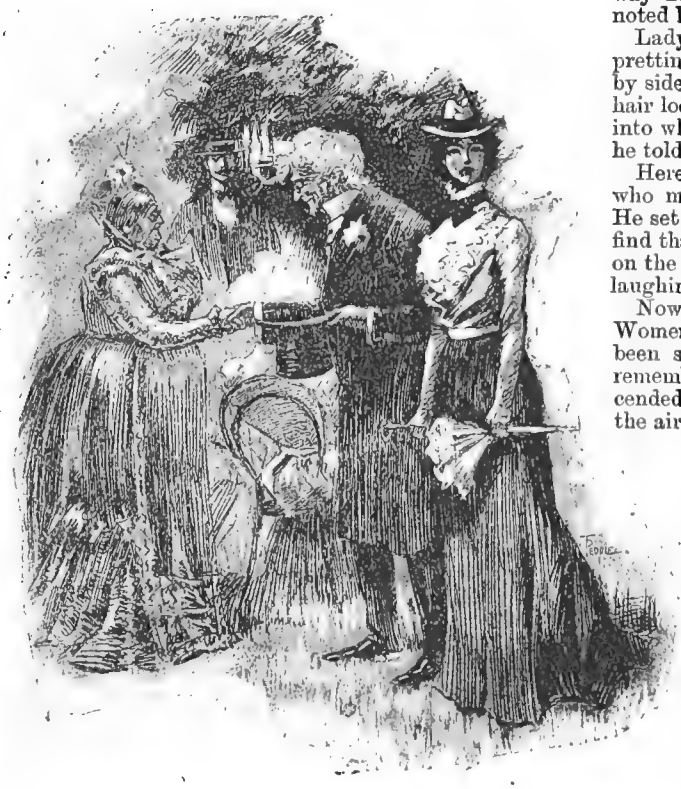
On another occasion, also at a big house-party, a girl arrived to stay armed with a formidable bundle of

Digitized by Google

"tracts"—not, I hasten to add, on religious subjects—all treatises on the manners and customs of birds.

A dear friend of hers was overheard remarking that she believed Cyril Benson was coming, and it was whispered that Lady Lettice would not be averse to—— etc., and so on. In point of fact Cyril Benson did turn up next day, and it was not long before everybody noticed that two heads were frequently seen very close together discussing (presumably) the tracts that lay before them. Indeed, things looked so promising for Lady Lettice that people began to say that it had really been very clever of her to work the thing so well.

But, unfortunately for Lady Lettice and her chances, there lived in the near neighbourhood a famous professor



On her head she wore the smartest felt.

of natural history, who had an only daughter whose name was Violet. People who loved her—and they were many—said she was as sweet as her name. People who didn't said that that shy manner of hers was only put on, that violets, even the real ones, only hid themselves in their leaves to make people want to look for them, and so on.

However, when Violet did put in her appearance at the castle one afternoon with her father, the two were voted a distinct success. He with his grand head, interesting talk, and the simplicity of manner which one meets with among the really great of this world—sometimes. She, tall, slender, graceful, masses of golden-brown hair, almost red here and there, large dreamy dark eyes, and the complexion of a girl who has lived a wholesome country life and scorns both powder and paint.

Her dress was just as it should be, though there was a distinct touch of originality about it, and on her head she wore the smartest felt, fresh from "Scott's," and stuck in the folded band of corded silk was a really beautiful blue jay's wing. On this wing Cyril Benson, who was introduced to her, tried to fix his eyes, but they kept wandering to her lovely face in spite of himself, and he forgot all about the jay for a moment while admiring the beautiful curve of throat and chin, and the pretty way her hair grew round her temples, and, above all, noted her entire absence of self-consciousness.

Lady Lettice's prettiness compared to this was the prettiness of a Bond Street female barber's block side by side with a lovely, living woman. Her much befrizzled hair looked almost vulgar beside the thick brown waves into which Violet's fell. However, the blue jay's wing, he told himself, settled the matter.

Here was somebody who badly needed converting, and who more absolutely fitted for the task than himself? He set himself to the work with quite fervent zeal—to find that, when he had said all the things he usually said on the subject so near his heart, this girl was absolutely laughing at him.

Now to Cyril Benson this was a new experience. Women were invariably extremely civil to him, he had been spoilt and petted by them ever since he could remember—not one of them to whom he had condescended to air his views on bird life but had listened with the air of a person who is imbibing highly important, not to say interesting and quite original, information, whereas this girl only laughed!

"My dear sir," she said, in the very quaintest way, when she had finished laughing, laughter which had quite angered him—yet he wished she would laugh again, she looked so adorably pretty, so—"my dear sir, you have been misinformed on one or two points." (Misinformed about birds—he—Cyril Benson!)

"I can speak with assurance on the subject," she went on to explain, "for, as you of course know, natural history is my father's special line of work and research, and as for years he and I have worked together, you understand."

And she proceeded to go over the "points" on which he had been "misinformed," and proved that she knew what she talked about—she never, somehow, gave him the impression that she was airing her knowledge, yet as she spoke she displayed an amount of learning which simply made his brain whirl. She suddenly wound up with:

"So you see really I don't think there is a bird on this earth I don't know something about—but perhaps that is why you talked to me about birds, you thought it was my subject, eh? Now, that is a mistake, you know, people wouldn't always rather talk about their subjects, they want to break up fresh ground, you see."

Cyril Benson looked at her reproachfully.

"Do you mean to tell me that you don't know that that is my subject?" he asked.

She threw up her hands in mock despair.

"What!" she said, "you a naturalist too? Well, then,

Digitized by Google

I suppose I must resign myself to talk shop. Let me see, what do you think of Professor Merton's discovery?"

"I've never heard of it."

She stared at him.

"Never heard of it!" she repeated, "and you a naturalist! That is queer."

"I'm not a naturalist!" he said, quite snappishly, "I'm only the president of the S.F.P.O.C.T.B."

"Ah!" she said, "I have heard of that—the Society

"'Never heard of it!' she repeated, 'and you a naturalist.'"

For Preventing Outcasts Coming To Britain—don't you find that rather difficult?"

"It means nothing of the sort," he said stiffly. "It means the Society For Prevention Of Cruelty To Birds."

"Is that it? You must forgive me, but when people talk in capital letters it is really hard to know. You see one letter stands for so many things, doesn't it? But to return to our subject—so you are the president of that Society? Why, how shocked you must be at my blue jay's wing; yet if you knew its history you would really think that blue jay deserved his fate. Our gamekeeper shot it—it was busy pecking a young pigeon to death."

"That is an exceptional case."

"I know, I am only telling you because I don't like you to think bad things about me in your heart."

Cyril Benson's face brightened perceptibly.

"You don't like me to—" he began to repeat her words—then paused—"now that is very good of you—to mind what I think one way or the other."

She laughed softly.

"People do mind as a rule, don't they?" she asked.

He smiled broadly.

"They do." he said slowly, "which is probably why you have put me into such a bad temper. I'm not used to being contradicted—it makes me see myself in a new light."

"And that is?"

"A very ludicrous one."

"How good for your conceit!" she told him gaily.

"Very!—but it's so disagreeable—like looking at oneself in a French mirror."

"That is simply a caricature," she said quickly; "and that is what you could never be."

He bowed gravely.

"Thank you, I am grateful for small mercies in this vale of tears. I see your father is preparing to go—you are walking? Yes? Then may I go part of the way back with you—I need the exercise, there was no shoot to-day."

Violet assented, and the three moved off together.

"There," said Mrs. Lindsay to Mrs. Hamilton, "at last is a girl who is evidently not setting her cap at Cyril Benson. It's really quite a relief."

"Not her cap, it is true," said Mrs. Hamilton, "but—did you see her hat?"

"Certainly I did—what of that?"

"She wore a blue jay's wing!"

"Well—that goes to prove what I have just said—indeed it was seeing that blue jay's wing gave rise to my remark."

"My dear Laura!" said her friend quite sorrowfully, "you are really not so 'quick at the uptake,' as we say in the Highlands, as I thought you were. Don't you see? All the other girls have taken the wings out of their hats in order to win Mr. Benson—and have failed. She has put a wing into hers for the same reason—it was a thoroughly original idea—she really deserves success."

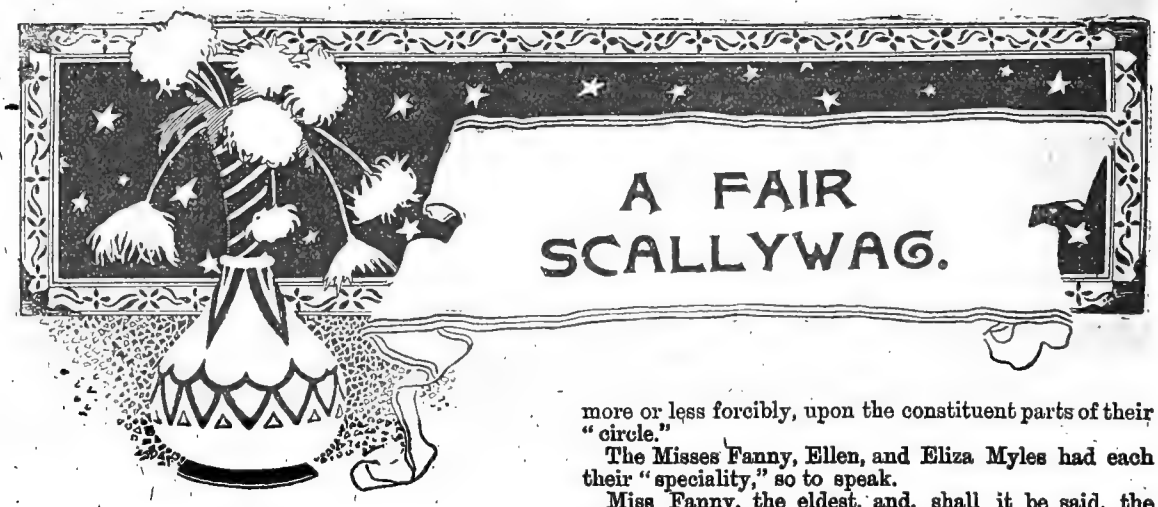
A male listener, sitting close by, shook his head.

"Those women, those women!" he groaned; "they have, from time immemorial, made mountains out of molehills. This time they have arranged a marriage—on the strength of a blue jay's wing!"

But, a few months later, when he read a certain announcement in the list of fashionable marriages of the *Morning Post*, he had to allow that the two good ladies had been right.

Splendid new serial coming soon. See "Editor's Page."

Digitized by Google



A FAIR SCALLYWAG.

NOBODY was quite sure where she came from.

This, she being, evidently, only just out of her "teens," was, in a way, unfortunate,—socially; for girls of tender age (and "twenty" is, in more senses than one, a tender age) ought not in the opinion of most right-thinking people, to be objects of doubt and suspicion.

Frankly, there was much—very much, that was attractive about Tita Neene; and the more attractive a woman is, or is thought to be, the greater is other people's curiosity with regard to her.

She had descended upon the inhabitants of Clinton Crescent, South Kensington, with a suddenness that had taken the general breath away.

A few days sufficed to prove that she had abundant means; and that the elderly female, who appeared to officiate dually as housekeeper and duenna, was of that rare and old-fashioned type, so seldom to be met with now-a-days; foster-mother almost; devoted humble friend quite.

Speculation with regard to the new-comer had its first beginning at No. 1; the tenants of which demand a descriptive word or two.

Three maiden ladies, sisters, were they, of——well, not uncertain age, the hand of time being only too plainly apparent.

The impress would not, perhaps, have been so noticeable, but for the fact that all the three (I regret to say it, but truth must out) were undeniably plain—some declared even downright ugly.

Be this as it might, one thing was clear, beyond argument or dispute, that they were more than ordinarily well-to-do; owning, as they did, indeed, the larger proportion of the houses in the Crescent. This rendered it somewhat surprising that, in spite of personal drawbacks, they had been unsuccessful in attracting the more needy of the bachelor tribe.

They were the surviving daughters of a certain long-deceased naval officer, and sometime member of Her Majesty's Corps of Gentlemen-at-Arms. This fact they never failed upon any and every opportunity to impress, more or less forcibly, upon the constituent parts of their "circle."

The Misses Fanny, Ellen, and Eliza Myles had each their "speciality," so to speak.

Miss Fanny, the eldest, and, shall it be said, the plainest of the trio, lived but for the card-table, her taste for whist amounting almost to a passion.

Miss Ellen was of a pensive, soulful (doleful, the ribald called it) disposition, she having, so report said, been the victim of an early disappointment, whatever that may mean.

Miss Eliza was the kitten, the frivolous young thing, whose particular forte was the trilling out, in the weakest, squeakiest voice imaginable, such highly exhilarating ditties as "By the sad sea waves"; (Miss Fanny assisting with the seconds) "My heart's in the Highlands"; "Teach me how to woo, love," and so on.

The "Three Graces"; (by which not inappropriate title they were, *sub-rosa*, known among their friends and acquaintances); were, therefore, a "shining" sisterhood, and locally a social power to be reckoned with and considered.

"No girl of her age, who is anybody, would be here in such a position; nobody knowing anything about her, too," said Miss Fanny.

"Something ought to be done about it!" said Miss Ellen. "It's not nice for other girls," plainly implying by her manner that they, the Misses Myles, were to be included in the "threatened."

"I hate her!" comprehensively said Miss Eliza. "I hear that she has talked about us already—says that my singing is—there, I hate her!"

"Well, girls," said Miss Fanny, in virtue of her seniorship, "she has only been here a fortnight. We will give her a month, and if, at the end of that time we have not discovered something—well, wrong about her, I will be content not to play another game of whist as long as I live."

Of course all this went the round of the "circle," to the intense relish and satisfaction of everybody.

Meanwhile, the subject of all this talk and delicate attention seemed to be not only quite unconscious of anything of the sort, but, on the contrary, as indifferent to public criticism and opinion as could well be.

To the disgust of the "Three Graces," more especially, Tita Neene rode, cycled, motored, and drove, in a perfectly reckless and outrageous manner, and with no

Digitized by Google

other attendant, in the first and last instances, than a strange, aristocratic young man, who on such occasions, drove or rode up to the door of Number Six; the pair going off together in the highest of spirits, and without the faintest suspicion of conventional "priggery."

The gentleman was absolutely unknown in the "Crescent," which, of course, only added to the heinousness of the offence, and the turpitude of the offender.

But there was worse behind.

One, Major Bland, a retired Army veteran, and a prominent member of the "circle," deposed, at a select evening gathering for card-playing and scandal-mongering purposes, at Number One, that the "adventuress" (so they had be-labelled her) had been seen at the theatre—alone—in the Pit!

He, Major Bland, was the witness on this awful indictment; although, he somewhat marred his testimony by confessing that he had felt half-inclined to offer his services; second thoughts, however, deciding him that he had perhaps better not.

"I should think not, indeed!" cried Miss Eliza, hysterically. "Why there is no knowing what the result might have been; these adventuresses are so artful, you know."

"Perhaps so," said the Major. "But there's no denying that she's not bad-looking; and she can take care of herself."

"Not bad-looking!" almost screamed Miss Ellen. "I'm astonished at you, Major!—but there, you men are all alike—you have no discrimination, and—no taste!"

Now, if the Major had been absolutely straightforward, and had told all that he knew, I verily believe that nothing short of a social cataclysm would have resulted.

From something, however, that I have since heard, it appears that on the evening of Miss Tita's escapade, she, although actually there alone, was seen by the Major to meet this same young fellow outside, whence, entering a hansom, they drove South Kensington-wards in company.

After all, the old soldier was not a bad sort, for while, by sheer force of habit, still superficially faithful to his little *coterie*, he was, nevertheless, resolved to neutralise, so far as in him lay, the baleful efforts of his lady friends to "crush" the maiden at Number Six.

Perhaps, indeed, he was influenced in this direction by an *esprit de corps*—a fellow feeling—he being persuaded, from certain unmistakable signs and indications that the gentlemanly young flutterer of the Clinton Crescent dovecote was a military man.

His Majesty's uniform could never cover anything save honour, chivalry and rectitude of purpose! There are of course, exceptions, but then, the major had implicit faith in the "cloth," and ignored "exceptions" as being alike misleading and vicious.

Everything that Tita did, or wore, or was reported to have said, was taken up, enlarged, and immediately sat in judgment upon.

The poor girl, affecting a style of dress, now came to be associated with the "mannish" set—the tailor-made "New Woman."

A walking-stick (crooked) too! and, oh, horror! the shameless hussy had been seen by Sister Ellen as the latter, one afternoon, was walking past Number Six; to be smoking!—smoking a cigarette, behind the flimsy veil of the lace curtains, at the open window.

Then her correspondence, it was enormous! Every post seemed to bring her a very avalanche of letters. Had eyes been X. Rays, Tita's epistolary secrets—if secrets they were—would assuredly soon have been public property.

"Well," said Miss Fanny, one morning, after a more than unusually large delivery, "if brother John's child ever turns up, and displays wanton and unmaidenly freedom such as this, we would—at least *I* would—disown her!"

The other two-thirds of the trio chorused a hearty acquiescence.

Brother John, it may be said, the fair virgins' only brother, had, owing to some disagreement with his father nearly thirty years before, emigrated to parts unknown.

But for a casually-seen birth-notice in an American paper, the sisters would never have known that he had even married; much less that a daughter had been born to him.

As time went on they concluded that his return to England was not to be looked for, and so, beyond an occasional and brief reference to the family scapegrace, he and his passed, for all practical purposes, out of the daily life and interests of the "Three Graces."

* * * * *

Clinton Crescent is nothing if not exclusive, and it will, therefore, he readily imagined that it was stirred to its deepest depth by the startling announcement that Miss Tita Neene would give a dinner party, and an after-dinner reception upon the evening of January 20th.

When the invitations to this function were duly received by the "cream" of the "circle," all was astonishment and open-mouthed indecision.

"To go" or "not to go," that was the question; but as the bell-wethers, (I crave their pardon; the "Three Graces"); decided to accept, the hesitant phase passed, to be succeeded by the curiously expectant.

Tita received her guests with none of that freedom of speech and manner with which she was credited, and which was so objectionable to the more precise among her neighbours.

No lady, howsoever high her station, and good her breeding, could have possibly surpassed her, as, with exactly the right word and the right gesture she smilingly bid welcome to the little crowd of censoriously-disposed critics.

It's no good pushing . .
A good thing . . . .
If you can't get . . . .
That good thing . . . .
Supplied fast enough . .

THAT'S BEEN OUR TROUBLE.

+ + +

The orders for Twenty Teazer exceeded the capacity of the making machines by tens of thousands. These orders have now been fulfilled, and we are in a position to meet any demand.

TWENTY TEAZER IS THE 20th CENTURY PUZZLE.

6d. EVERYWHERE. 6d.

Digitized by Google

All was so quiet, so unobtrusively "proper," that nothing in the shape of a "sensation" was even suspected as being imminent.

The dinner over, the reception began. The wealth and fashion of Clinton Crescent flowed up and down the flower-decked stairway, exchanging low-voiced opinions, or indulging in, what I fear I must write, hypocritically enthusiastic comments upon both entertainment and hostess.

Then it was noticed that the "Three Graces" were not making any movement towards departing.

A pink note, delivered about half-past eleven to Miss Fanny, by a servant, ran as follows:

> Will Miss Myles, and her sisters kindly remain for a few moments after all have gone.
>
> Tita Neene.

Most extraordinary! What could it mean?

The last guest had departed, and in the pretty, deserted-looking, wax-lit drawing-room there lingered only the wondering sisters, and—Tita.

* * * * *

It will be long before Clinton Crescent recovers from the shock it experienced at that which took place the next morning.

About noon, Miss Ellen was seen to sally forth, and, making her way to Number Six, to ascend the steps, and knock at the door.

In something less than a quarter-of-an-hour she emerged again with—Tita, with whom she returned to Number One.

Later the following facts leaked out.

Tita Neene was the daughter of brother John, deceased twelve months before, and being her father's daughter, and inheriting the more harmless of his eccentricities, she had adopted this original method of claiming acquaintance with her paternal relatives.

Her surname, Neene, was explained by her having taken it on succeeding to the large fortune of her mother's only brother, a well-known Wall Street broker of New York.

But who was the mysterious young man? Clinton Crescent obstinately refused complete absolution until his intrusion into the story was satisfactorily explained.

This, however, was soon done.

Douglas Grant, the son of people to whom Tita had brought introductions from Montreal, had during the few weeks she had passed in his mother's house, on her first arrival in England, learnt to love her; the rides and drives being the natural outcome.

They were both of them unconventional to a degree; although his "fair Scallywag," as he came to call her, easily distanced him in the race for the "out-of-the-way."

* * * * *

The end of things was even more extraordinary, inasmuch as it went a long way towards realising the "improbable."

The "Three Graces" by reason, maybe, of their niece's winning personality, developed, individually and collectively, wondrous changes; and, though still, in every sense of the word, eminently anti-progressive, displayed a most praiseworthy inclination to take a more rational view of life in general, and of their own in particular.

Ralph Enderby.

The Two Beryls.

Eric Creighton found it difficult to refuse a favour under any circumstances, but to have to refuse when the girl whom he admired above all others was the suppliant was hard lines indeed.

However, there was no option in this case. The Reverend James Wainwright was as unholy as he was unpopular, Eric knew, and the last man in the world to whom he would have thought of presenting the living of Penthurst. That he was the brother of Beryl Wainwright (whom he had met with her mother the previous year in Scotland) made the case a matter of sacrifice.

Beryl had given him no hope of winning her; on the contrary she had let him understand that he was only the companion of a pleasant holiday. And now she had written to him and asked a favour. What a joy it would have been to him to have granted it. By refusing he fully realised that he was forfeiting all claims to her better acquaintanceship. When a woman condescends to ask a favour from a man who loves her she does not expect a rebuff.

All the same he was surprised at her request because the misdeeds of the applicant were well known. But probably she was blinded to his true character by her sisterly affection.

Thinking of all this, Eric, nevertheless, bestowed the living elsewhere, for to please no woman could he abuse the trust reposed in him.

In the course of the next week Eric had to attend some important meetings in the next county. With a heavy heart he arrived at Blankboro', for it was the home of Beryl Wainwright and every reminder of her was tinged with sadness.

* * * * *

"Ah, how do you do, Mr, Creighton? So good of you to spare us an hour or two this evening when you are so busy. You know Miss Wainwright, I believe, will you take her in to dinner?" And Lady Hadley turned to her next guest.

Left together Beryl held out her hand smiling and opened the conversation.

"You have not been to see us since you came to Blankboro', Mr. Creighton. My mother was sorry, as she had something she particularly wished to say to you."

Eric flushed.

"I thought that your mother would, naturally, not care to see me after my ungracious behaviour."

"I did not know—what was it? You see I have only just come home from America and have not had time to hear all the news. But I'm sure you are mistaken, mother will be delighted to see you."

"America! Have you been home long?"

"Only arrived the day before yesterday. I'm glad I came back in time for the first meet. Are you hunting this season?"

Eric was getting bewildered. Ignoring Beryl's question he asked:

Digitized by Google

"But your letter was from Blankboro', you wrote to me from here, did you not?"

"I have never written to you in my life, Mr. Creighton. What are you referring to? I don't suppose you have ever seen my handwriting."

"No, not before, that is true. But really this is curious. There seems to be some mystery here."

Beryl's annoyance vanished when she saw that her companion was in genuine distress. However, her attention was at that moment diverted by her neighbour on the right, who had been trying for some time to attract her notice.

Left for a moment to his own thoughts Eric began to feel less despondent; evidently there had been no great resentment of his conduct, but he was utterly at a loss to understand her forgetfulness.

After a short discussion Beryl turned to Eric again.

"You must tell me about this mystery. What did I write to you about?"

"The living, you know."

"But I'm afraid I don't know."

Then Eric explained that when a living he had in his gift had become vacant he had an application from the Rev. James Wainwright who was well-known to him by name, inclosing a note signed Beryl Wainwright.

"Until then I had no idea that you were his sister," he added.

Beryl was silent for a moment.

"And your answer," she asked at last, then, noticing the look on her face she understood.

"You thought he was my brother. You knew him by repute, and thought I had asked this thing of you, and said no. May I ask what was in the note?"

"So far as I can remember it was worded 'I shall look upon the appointment of my brother as a personal favour.'"

"Probably my mother wished to explain matters to you, her name is Beryl and the Rev. James Wainwright is my uncle. Can you come to see mother to-morrow afternoon?"

"May I come to see you Beryl?" he asked, looking into her eyes.

She met his look of love and hope and answered:

"This afternoon I would have said no; now—I say yes."

R. C.

MURDER.

£100 REWARD.

WHO KILLED JAMES TRENT?

The sum of One Hundred Pounds will be given by the Proprietors of "Pearson's Weekly" to that person who, between April 4 and April 23, first acquaints them with the name of the individual or individuals

WHO KILLED JAMES TRENT,

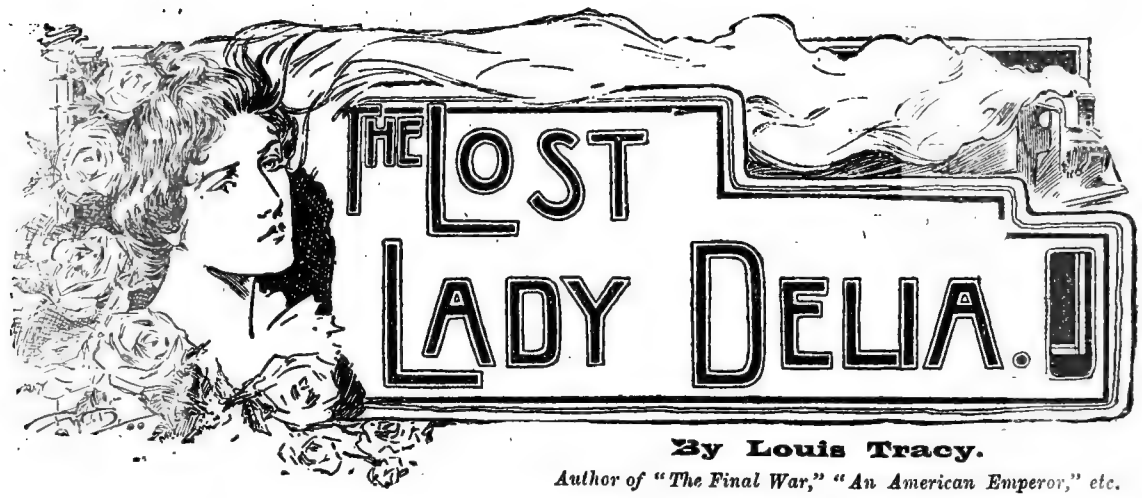
and the manner in which he was killed. A full description of James Trent and those suspected of having murdered him will be found in "Pearson's Weekly," published on April 4.

WHO KILLED JAMES TRENT?

Nothing so weirdly mysterious as this story has ever been written. It opens with James Trent, the man of many millions, sitting at the head of his dinner table, stabbed to the heart. Nobody is in the room with him at the moment of his death, though several people are within ear-shot. They stand talking on the other side of the only door leading into his room, and that door is open. Nobody is concealed within the room; it has no secret doors either in the walls, the ceiling, or the floor. It has no chimney—at least no chimney down which any person could squeeze. It has one window partly open, yet the flowers and ferns have not been disturbed; there is an area and a spiked iron railing protecting this window. Obviously, it is impossible to enter that way. Then WHO KILLED JAMES TRENT, and how was he killed? It is a maddening mystery. The police find the task hopeless; his friends are in despair.

WHO KILLED JAMES TRENT? The most weird, the most mysterious, the most fascinating story ever written. Starts in PEARSON'S WEEKLY on April 4th. Order now.

Digitized by Google



By Louis Tracy.

Author of "The Final War," "An American Emperor," etc.

CHAPTER XVII. *(continued).*

"Evidently. She was surprised last Thursday week to receive a telegram asking her to meet him at York Railway Station. When she got there he asked her to write the letter he handed to you and to post it in London on Saturday evening. He explained that his action was due to his keen anxiety to shield his wife's name, and that this letter would settle the affair altogether. As he handed her another bundle of notes, and promised to settle £100 a year on her for life, she was willing enough to help him. During your interview with her you guessed the reason why she wrote Lady Delia's hand so perfectly. She had copied it for three years."

"All this must have astonished you considerably?"

"Mr. Brett, astonished isn't the word, I was flabbergasted. Once she started talking I let her alone, only rattling the handcuffs when she seemed inclined to stop. But all the time I felt as if the top of my head had been blown off."

"I imagine she had not much more to tell you?"

"She pitched into you as the cause of all the mischief, and went so far as to say that she was sure it was not Sir Charles who killed Lady Delia, but you yourself."

Brett winced at Jane Harding's logic. Were he able to retrieve the past three months the mystery of Lady Delia's death would have remained a mystery for ever.

"Now about the photograph," said the detective. "After I had left Jane Harding with a solemn warning to speak to no one until I saw her again, I made a round of the fashionable photographers, and soon obtained an excellent likeness of Sir Charles. I showed it to Dobson, and she said: 'That is Colonel Montgomery.' I showed it to the foreman of the furniture warehouse, and he said: 'That is the image of the man who ordered Mrs. Hilmer's suite. Now, what on earth is the upshot of this business to be? I called at Wensley House, but was told Sir Charles was not in town. Had he been in, I would not have seen him until I had discussed matters with you."

"That is very good of you, Mr. Winter. May I ask your reason for showing him this consideration?"

The policeman, who was very earnest and very excited, banged his hand on the table as he cried:

"Don't you see what all this amounts to? I have no option but to arrest Sir Charles Lyle for the murder of his wife."

"That is the sad conclusion."

"And do you believe he killed her?"

"Strange as it may seem to you, I do not."

"And I'm jiggered if I do, either."

"I—I am greatly obliged to you, Winter."

Brett bent his head almost to his knees, and for some minutes there was complete silence.

When he again looked at the detective there were tears in his eyes.

"What can we do to unravel this tangled skein without creating untold mischief?" he murmured.

"It beats me, sir," was the perplexed answer. "But when I came in I imagined that Jane Harding or someone had been to see you. Surely you had learnt something of all this before my arrival?"

"Yes indeed. I had reached your goal, but by a different route. Unfortunately, my discovery only goes to confirm yours."

Brett then told him of his visit to the lawyer's office, and its result.

Mr. Winter listened to the recital with knitted brows. "It is very clear," he said, when Reggie had ended, "that Lady Delia was killed in Mrs. Hilmer's flat, that Sir Charles Lyle knew of her death, that he himself conveyed the body to the river bank at Putney, and that ever since he has tried to throw dust in our eyes, and prevent any knowledge of the true state of affairs reaching us."

"Your summary cannot be disputed in the least particular."

"Well, Mr. Brett, we must do *something*. If you don't like to interfere, then *I* must."

"There is but one person in the world who can enlighten us as to the facts. That person obviously is Sir Charles Lyle himself."

"Unquestionably."

Brett looked at his watch. It was 10.30 p.m. He rose.

"Let us go to him," he said.

"But he is not in London."

"He is. I expect you will find that he gave orders for no one to be admitted, and told the servants to say he had left town to make the denial more emphatic."

"It will be a terrible business, I fear, Mr. Brett."

"I dread it—on my soul I do. But I cannot shirk this final attempt to save my friend. My presence may tend to help forward a final and full explanation. No matter what the pain to myself, I must be present. Come, it is late already!"

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Sir Charles Lyle's Journey.

The streets were comparatively deserted as they drove quickly up Whitehall and across the lower side of Trafalgar Square. It is a common belief, even amongst Londoners themselves, that the traffic is dense in the main thorough-

Digitized by Google

fares at all hours of the night until twelve o'clock has long past.

But to the experienced eye there is a marked hiatus between half-past nine and eleven o'clock. At such a time Charing Cross is negotiable, Piccadilly Circus loses much of its terror, and a hansom may turn out of Regent Street into Oxford Street without the fare being impelled to clutch convulsively at the brass window-slide in a make-believe effort to save the vehicle from being crushed like a walnut shell between two heavy 'buses.

Such considerations did not appeal to Brett and his companion on this occasion.

For some inexplicable cause they both felt that they were in a desperate hurry.

A momentary stoppage at the turn into Orchard Street caused each man to swear, quite unconsciously. Now that the supreme moment in this most painful investigation was at hand they resented the slightest delay. Though they were barely fifteen minutes in the cab it seemed an hour before they alighted at Wensley House, Portman Square.

In response to an imperative ring a footman appeared. Instead of answering the barrister's question as to whether Sir Charles Lyle was at home or not, he said: "You are Mr. Brett, sir, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"Sir Charles is at home, but he retired to his room before dinner. He is not well and he may have gone to bed, but he said that if you came you were to be admitted. I will ask Mr. Thompson."

"Better send Thompson to me," said Brett decisively; and in a minute the old butler stood before him.

"I hear that Sir Charles has retired for the night," said Brett.

Thompson had caught sight of Winter standing on the steps. A few hours earlier he had himself told the policeman that the baronet was out of town. It was an awkward dilemma, and he coughed doubtingly whilst he racked his brains for a judicious answer.

But Brett grasped his difficulty. "It is all right, Thompson. Mr. Winter quite understands the position. Do you think Sir Charles is in bed?"

"I will go and see, sir. He was very anxious that you should be sent upstairs if you called. But that was when he was in the library."

Brett and the detective entered the hall, the butler closed the door behind them, and then solemnly ascended the stairs to Sir Charles Lyle's bedroom, which was situated on the first floor along a corridor towards the back of the house.

They distinctly heard the polite knock on the door and Thompson's voice, "Are you asleep, Sir Charles?"

After a pause there was another knock, and the same question in a slightly louder key.

Then the butler returned, saying as he came down the stairs: "Sir Charles seems to be sound asleep, sir."

Brett and Winter exchanged glances. The barrister was disappointed, almost perturbed, but he said: "In that case we will not disturb him. Sir Charles does not often retire so early."

"No, sir. I have never known him go to his room so early before. He told me not to serve dinner as he wasn't well. He would not let me get anything for him. He just took some wine, and I have not seen him since."

"Since when?"

"About 7.30, sir."

Brett turned to depart, but Thompson, with the privilege of an old servant when talking to one whom he knew to be on familiar terms with his master, whispered:

"That there blessed maid turned up again this afternoon, sir."

The barrister started violently.

"Not Jane Harding, surely?"

"Yes, sir. She came at four o'clock and asked for Sir Charles, as bold as brass."

25,000 TRIAL PACKAGES Free!

Rheumatism Cured by a Single Remedy that You May Try Without Spending a Cent.—Cured Many Cases of 30 and 40 Years' Standing.

JOHN A. SMITH.

If you have rheumatism, write to me, and I will send you, free of cost, a trial package of a harmless remedy, which cured me and thousands of others, among them cases of over fifty years' standing. It is a grand remedy, and in order that every suffering reader may learn about it, I will gladly send them a Trial Package free, even if more than 25,000 invalids should apply. Many a distressing case of rheumatism, among them some which defied Hospital, Drugs, Electricity, and medical skill, were successfully cured. In Denham, Ind., U.S.A., it cured a lady, who then cured fifteen of her neighbours. In Prosser, Nebr., U.S.A., it cured Mrs. C. Morritz, who had been afflicted for fifty-two years. In Fountain City, Wis., U.S.A., it cured Hon. Jacob Serauer, after suffering for thirty-three years, notwithstanding having employed seven physicians. At 130 Oak Street, Vincennes, Ind., U.S.A., this remedy rescued Miss Emma Callender from a case of rheumatism, which her physicians considered fatal. Rev. C. Sund, of Harrisville, Wis., U.S.A., testifies that this remedy cured two members of his congregation, one who had suffered eighteen, the other twenty-five years. In England the following have written me cordial letters of thanks, and testify that they have been completely cured of rheumatism through Gloria Tonic: J. E. Smith, of Ranskill, Notts; Mrs. C. Gregory, of South Woodford, Essex; Mr. W. Booth, of Dudley, near Huddersfield; Miss Mary Fullon, of Bally Truckle; Mrs. Henry Bester, of Weldon, near Daventry. Thousands of similar instances could be mentioned where this horrible plague has been completely cured. Write at once for a free trial package and other information, for it is an honest remedy that you can test before you part with your money. Be sure and write your name plainly and give your full address, to avoid any mistakes in delivery. Mr. Smith's principal offices are in Germania Building, Milwaukee, Wis., U.S.A., but for the convenience of the British public he has also opened London offices. Address all letters to John A. Smith (Dept. 1007), 6 and 7 Stonecutter Street, London, E.C.

Digitized by Google

"Did he see her?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"Do you hear that, Winter?"

The detective nodded.

"She must have been here about half-an-hour before me," he said, addressing the butler.

"That's about right, sir."

"But I understood," went on Brett, "that Sir Charles was not at home to ordinary callers?"

Thompson shuffled about somewhat uneasily. He wished now he had held his tongue. "I had my orders, sir," he murmured, in extenuation of his apparently diverse actions.

"Tell me what your orders were," persisted Brett.

The man hesitated, not wishful to offend his master's friend, but too well trained to reveal the explicit instructions given him by Sir Charles Lyle.

"Do not be afraid. I will explain everything to Sir Charles personally. We cannot best judge what to do—whether to wake him or not—unless we know the position," went on the barrister.

Thus absolved from blame, Thompson took from his waistcoat pocket a folded sheet of notepaper.

"I don't pretend to understand the reason, sir," he said, "but Sir Charles wrote this himself, and told me to be careful to obey him exactly."

The barrister eagerly grasped the note and read:

If Mr. Brett, Jane Harding, or Mrs. Hilmer should call, admit any of them immediately. To all others say that I have left town—some days ago, should they ask you.

C. L.

Winter, the round-eyed and bullet-headed, gazed with goggle orbs over Brett's shoulder.

"That settles it, Mr. Brett," he said. "We *must* see him."

"Thompson," said Brett, "does Sir Charles usually lock his door?"

"Never, sir."

"Very well. Knock again, and then try the door. We will come with you."

Something in the barrister's manner rather than his words sent cold shivers down the old butler's spine.

"I do hope there's nothing wrong, sir," he commenced; but Brett was already halfway up the stairs. Both he and Winter guessed what had happened. They knew that poor Thompson's repeated summons at the bed-room door would remain for ever unanswered—that the unfortunate baronet had quitted the dread certainties of this world for the uncertainties of the next.

They were not mistaken. A few minutes later they found him listlessly drooping over the side of the chair in which he was seated, partly undressed, and seemingly overcome at the moment when he was about to take off his boots.

On a table near him were two bottles, each half-emptied, and an empty wineglass. Each of the bottles bore the label of a well-known chemist. One was indorsed "Sleeping draught," the other "Poison," and "Chloral."

The three men were pale as the limp inanimate form in the chair whilst they silently noted these details. Brett raised the head of his friend in the hope that life might not yet be extinct. But Sir Charles Lyle had taken his measures effectually. Though the *rigor mortis* had not set in, he had evidently been dead some time.

Thompson, quite beside himself with grief, dropped to his knees by his master's side.

"Sir Charles!" he wailed. "Sir Charles! For the love of Heaven speak to us. You can't be dead. Oh you can't! It ain't fair. You're too young to die. What curse has come upon the house that both should go?"

Brett leant over and shook the old butler firmly by the shoulder.

"Thompson," he said, impressively, for now that the crisis he feared had come and gone, he exercised full control over himself. "Thompson, if you ever wished to serve Sir Charles Lyle you must do so now by remaining calm. For his sake help us, and do not create an unnecessary scene."

Governed by the more powerful nature, the affrighted man staggered to his feet.

"What shall I do, sir?" he whimpered. "Shall I send for a doctor?"

"Yes; say Sir Charles is very ill. Not a word to a soul about what has happened until we have carefully examined the room."

At that instant Mr. Winter caught sight of a large and bulky envelope, which had fallen to the floor and rested against a leg of the chair on which Sir Charles Lyle was seated.

Picking it up he found it was addressed, "Reginald Brett, Esq. To be delivered to him *at once*."

"This will explain matters, I expect," said the detective.

"Whatever could have come to my master to do such a thing?" groaned Thompson, turning to reach the door.

"Come back," cried Brett sharply. "Now look here, Thompson," he went on, placing both his hands on the butler's shoulders and looking him straight in the eyes, "it is imperative that you should pull yourself together. That sort of remark will never do. Sir Charles has simply taken an overdose of chloral accidentally. He has slept badly ever since Lady Lyle's death, you understand, and has been in the habit of taking sleeping draughts. Now, before you leave the room tell me exactly what has happened, in your own language."

"I can't put it together now, sir, but I won't say anything to anybody. You can trust me for that. Why, I loved him as my own son, I did."

"Yes, I know that well. But remember! An overdose. An accident. Nothing else. Do you follow me?"

"Quite, sir. Heaven help us all."

"Very well. Now send for the doctor, without needlessly alarming the other servants."

Brett placed the envelope in the pocket of his overcoat, saying to the detective: "We will examine this later, Winter. Just now we must do what we can to avoid a scandal. The case between Lady Delia and her husband will be settled by a higher tribunal than we had counted upon."

"It certainly *looks* like an accident, Mr. Brett," was the answer, "but it all depends upon the view the doctor takes. And you know, of course, that I shall have to report the real facts to my superiors."

"That is obvious. Yet no harm is done at this early stage in taking such steps as may finally render undue publicity needless. It may be impossible: but on the other hand, until we have heard Sir Charles' version, contained, I suppose, in this letter to me, it is advisable to sustain the theory of an accidental death."

"Anything I can do to help you will be done," replied the detective. With that they dropped the subject, and more carefully scrutinized the room.

To all intents and purposes Sir Charles Lyle might have inadvertently brought about the catastrophe. The sleeping-draught bore the ledger number of its prescription, and there is nothing unusual in a patient striving to help the cautious dose ordered by a physician by the addition of a more powerful nostrum.

His partly-dressed state, too, argued that he had taken the fatal mixture at a time when he contemplated retiring to rest forthwith. A fire still burnt in the grate, and on the mantelpiece—in a position where the baronet must see it until the moment when all things faded from his vision—was a beautiful miniature of his wife.

The detective, with professional nonchalance, soon sat down. There was nothing to do but to await the arrival of the doctor, and having heard his report, to go home.

In the quietude of the room, with the strain of paramount necessity for caution relaxed, Brett was profoundly moved at the spectacle of his dead friend. Whatever his logical faculties might argue he could not regard this man as a murderer. If Lady Lyle met her death at his hand then it

Digitized by Google

THE MOST NUTRITIOUS.

EPPS'S

GRATEFUL—COMFORTING.

COCOA

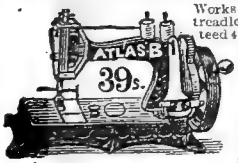
BREAKFAST—SUPPER.

SILVER QUEEN CYCLES.

ON MONTHLY PAYMENTS Enormous Stock. New and second-hand. From **10s.** MONTHLY. Carriage paid. ILLUSTRATED PRICE LISTS POST FREE any address. SILVER QUEEN CYCLE CO. LTD.

221 Tottenham Court Road, London, W.

ATLAS LOCKSTITCH MACHINE.



Works by hand or treadle. Guaranteed 4 years. Equal in quality and size to any machine To ensure satisfaction, we will send machine on receipt of 5/- P.O. for ONE MONTH'S TRIAL. Balance can be paid 5/- Monthly. Call or write for designs and Samples of work. **39/-**

THE ATLAS SEWING MACHINE CO., 184a High St., Camden Town, London, N.W., 63 Seven Sisters Rd., N.; 14 High Rd., Kilburn.

DRUNKENNESS

CURED. This can be done with or without patient's knowledge. Send me a stamp and I will tell you how. (Send no money.) Address, in confidence, Mrs. C. H. (Room 8), 195 Oxford Street, London, W.

JUNO CYCLES FOR LADIES & GENTS.

THE VERY BEST. FREE or FIXED WHEELS The most up-to-date. Carriage Paid.

Discount for Cash.

		Monthly.
£8 10s.	...	14 2
£11 11s.	...	19 3
£12 .	...	20/-
£12 12s.	...	21 -
£11 14s.	...	24 6

Write for New Season's List. **JUNO** Cycles and Accessories (over 100 pages) sent Post Free.

JUNO ... ... £10 ... 16/8 monthly.
Lady Safety ... £11 ... 18/4 monthly. Matherly Hard Wood Cycle Stand, 2/6. Handlebar Basket, 10½d.

METROPOLITAN MACHINISTS CO. LTD., Juno Cycle School, and Works, 75, 76 Bishopsgate Street Without E.C., and Piccadilly Circus, London, W.

£500 CASH FREE

NO MONEY REQUIRED. WE TRUST YOU.

We give you your choice of either of our **£2 10s.** REAL SILVER WATCH (with chain), or A REAL GOLD RING set with REAL DIAMONDS and other stones, for selling NINE articles of Jewellery at 1/6 each. (Regular price 2/6).

We do not want your money.

Just send us a stamped addressed envelope and say that you will either sell the jewellery or return it to us if you fail to sell it. On receiving your letter we will at once post you the jewellery.

When sold, send us the 13/6 you have received for same, and we will at once send you ABSOLUTELY FREE our £2 10s. Real Silver Watch with Chain, or the Gold Ring, whichever you desire.

You can sell our Jewellery in a few minutes at 1/6 each article. We have thousands of testimonials as to the quality and value both of our Jewellery and Presents.

We are giving away **£100** per Month during March, April, May, June, and July, making **£500** in all. Is not this worth trying for? Particulars with each packet of Jewellery sent out by us.

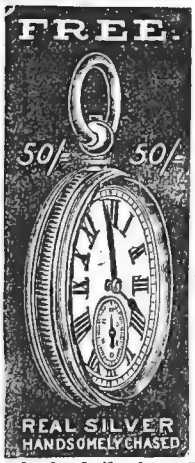
Send no money. Write to-day.

BRITISH PREMIUM SYNDICATE (Dept. 5) 282 CENTRAL CHAMBERS, GLASGOW.

£50 EASILY EARNED

Send No Money, We Trust You.

FREE.



WE GIVE YOU YOUR CHOICE of either of these handsome presents for selling NINE articles of Jewellery at 1s. 6d. each. (Regular price, 2s. 6d.)

WE DO NOT WANT YOUR MONEY.

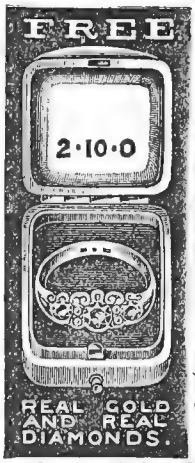
JUST WRITE US A POST-CARD

with your name and address clearly written, saying that you will either sell the jewellery or return it to us if you fail to sell it. On receiving your **post-card,** we will at once post you the jewellery.

When sold, send us the 13s. 6d. you have received for same, and we will **AT ONCE send you** (no waiting) **ABSOLUTELY FREE,** our £2 10s. Real Silver Watch, with Chain, or the Gold Ring, whichever you desire. A **Written Guarantee for Ten Years** sent with each watch.

You can sell our Jewellery in a few minutes at 1s. 6d. each article. We have thousands of testimonials and press notices as to the quality and value both of our Jewellery and Presents. With each packet we send you particulars of how you can **easily earn £50,** and remember

FREE



IT COSTS YOU NOTHING

to try. Herewith we append copy of receipt from the **lucky winner** of the £50 prize offered during January, 1901:—

22 Cory St., Resolven, near Neath, S. Wales.
Received from the British Goldsmiths Co., Bank of England Note for Fifty Pounds in payment for Cash Prize, in addition to the Presents offered for selling the largest number of their packets of Jewellery during the month of January, 1901.
Feb. 5, 1901. *(Signed) JOHN SANDERS.*

SEND NO MONEY. WRITE US TO-DAY.

SEND NO STAMPS. ONLY A POST-CARD.

BRITISH GOLDSMITHS CO. (DEPT. 29), 48 GRAY'S INN RD., LONDON.

'ALKAN'

Cures in ONE MINUTE by INHALATION.

THE EFFECT IS MARVELLOUS.

THE

ONE MINUTE CURE

FOR

HEADACHE, TOOTHACHE, NEURALGIA, FACIAL NEURALGIA, NEURALGIA OF THE EAR.

This simple and perfectly harmless remedy has cured instantaneously thousands suffering from the above complaints.

Of all Chemists and Stores, Prices **2/9** and **4/6** per bottle. Sent post paid to any part of the United Kingdom on receipt of price.

Or of the Proprietors: **B. & G. ALKAN,**

General Depot:

150 STRAND, LONDON, W.C.

A FREE GIFT.

500 40-EGG INCUBATORS.

Ladies and Gentlemen can greatly increase their incomes by **POULTRY BREEDING,** thus converting 1d. Eggs into 1s. Chickens. To encourage this industry we intend supplying each applicant during the next 28 days with one of our **40-Egg Incubators.**

Write for **Gift Free Form** to POULTRY BREEDERS' APPLIANCE Co., 423 Kingsland Road, London, N.E.

HELP WANTED { EITHER SEX.

Knitting Hosiery to fill large Contracts. Good prices paid. Work Winter and Summer. **MACHINES AND YARN FURNISHED** on trial free to Trustworthy Families. Distance no hindrance. Yarn is sent to be worked up and returned to us when finished. Simple Instructions.

Write To-day For The Work.

THE H.C. KNITTING CO., 63, (DEPT. K) HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON W.C.

Digitized by Google

must have been the result of some terrible mistake—of some momentary outburst of passion which never contemplated such a sequel.

Poisons which kill by stupefaction do not distort their victims as in cases where violent irritants are used.

Sir Charles Lyle might have been in deep sleep, exhausted by toil or pain—sleep the counterfeit of death—whilst the bright colours and speaking eyes of the miniature counterfeited life. Standing between these two—both the mere images of the man and the woman he had known so well—the barrister insensibly felt that at last they had peace.

It was his first experience of the tremendous change in the relationship established by death. It utterly overpowered him. No mere words could express his emotions. Between him and those that had been was imposed the implacable wall of eternity.

A bustle in the hall beneath aroused him from his grief-stricken stupor, and Mr. Winter's commonplace tones sounded strange to his ears.

"Here's the doctor."

A well-known physician hastened to the room. Thompson had carefully followed instructions, for the doctor was not prepared for the condition of affairs that a glance revealed to his practised eye.

"Surely he is not dead?" he cried, looking from the form in the chair to the two men.

Brett answered him:

"Yes, for some hours, I fear, but we wanted to avoid spreading unnecessary rumours until——"

"I understand. My poor friend! How came this to happen?"

The skilled practitioner merely lifted one of the dead man's eyelids, and then turned to examine the bottles on the table.

"My own prescription," he said, after tasting the contents of one phial. "Ah, this was bad; why did he not consult me?" and he sadly shook his head as he tasted the remaining liquid in the second.

"What do you make of it?" said Brett.

He looked the other steadily in the face and the doctor interpreted the cause of his anxiety.

"A clear case of accidental poisoning," he replied, "Sir Charles has consulted me several times during the past week on account of his extreme insomnia. I specifically warned him against overdoing my treatment. Change of air, exercise, and diet are the true specifics for sleeplessness, especially when induced, as his was, by a morbid state of mind."

"You mean——"

"That Sir Charles has never recovered from the shock of his wife's death. I did not know of it myself until it was announced recently, and I gathered from him that the manner of her demise was partly unaccounted for. Altogether, it is a sad business that such a couple should be taken in such manner."

Mr. Winter was industriously taking notes the while, and the doctor regarded him with a questioning look.

"This gentleman is in the police," explained Brett.

"Indeed!"

"Yes. We came here by mere accident. Mr. Winter and I were engaged in an important inquiry—the cause of Lady Delia's disappearance, in fact—and we hurried here at a late hour to consult with Sir Charles. Hence our presence and this discovery."

"How strange!"

"There is no reason now," broke in the detective, "why the body should not be moved?"

Brett shuddered at the phrase. It suggested the inevitable.

"Not in the least. I am quite satisfied as to the cause of death."

The dispatch of telegrams and other necessary details kept Brett busily employed until two o'clock.

Then he rushed off to his own chambers, and in the privacy of his own library he was at last able to break the seal of the packet left for him as the final act and word of the late Sir Charles Lyle.

CHAPTER XXIX.

How Lady Delia Disappeared.

(Being the MS. left by Sir Charles Lyle, Bart., and addressed to Reginald Brett, Esq., Barrister-at-Law.)

It is customary, I believe, for poor wretches who are sentenced to undergo the last punishment of the law to be allowed a three weeks' respite between the date of their sentence and that on which they are executed. I am in the position of such a one. The difference between me and the convicted felon lies merely in detail, and in most respects I am worse situated than he. My period of agony is longer drawn out, I am condemned to die by my own hand, I am mocked by the surroundings of luxury, taunted by the knowledge that though life and even a sort of happiness are within my reach I must not avail myself of them.

There may come a time in the affairs of any man when he is compelled to choose between a dishonoured existence and voluntary death. These unpleasant alternatives are now before me. You, who know me, would never doubt which of them I should adopt, nor will you upbraid me because our judgments coincide. There is nothing for it, Brett, but quiet death in the least obtrusive form, and so disposed that it may be possible for you, chief among my friends and the only person I can trust to fulfil my wishes, to arrange matters, so that my memory may be speedily forgotten. My virtues, I fear, will not secure me immortality; my faults, I hope, will not be spread broadcast to cram the maws of gaping scandalmongers.

If I do not shirk this final issue neither do I crave pity. In setting forth plainly the history of my wife's death and its results, I am actuated solely by a desire to protect others from needless suspicion. Having resolved to pay forfeit for my own errors, I claim to have expiated them. This document is an explanation, not a confession.

I have not much time left wherein to best shape my story so as to be just to all, myself included. If I am not mistaken, the officers of the law are in hot chase of me, but my statement shall not be made to an earthly judge. The words of a man about to die may not be well chosen; they should at least be true. I will tell of events as nearly as possible in their sequence of time. If I leave gaps through haste or forgetfulness you will, from your own knowledge of the facts, readily fill them up once you are in possession of the salient features.

Mensmore and his sister were the friends of my early years. We played together as children. Gwendoline Mensmore was two years younger than I, and I well remember making love to her at the age of eleven. Her mother died when she was quite a baby, and her father married again, so her step-brother Albert is her junior by four years. I taught him how to ride and swim and play cricket, as my father's place in Surrey—we did not acquire the Yorkshire property until the death of my grandfather—adjoined the estate General Mensmore occupied after his retirement from the Army.

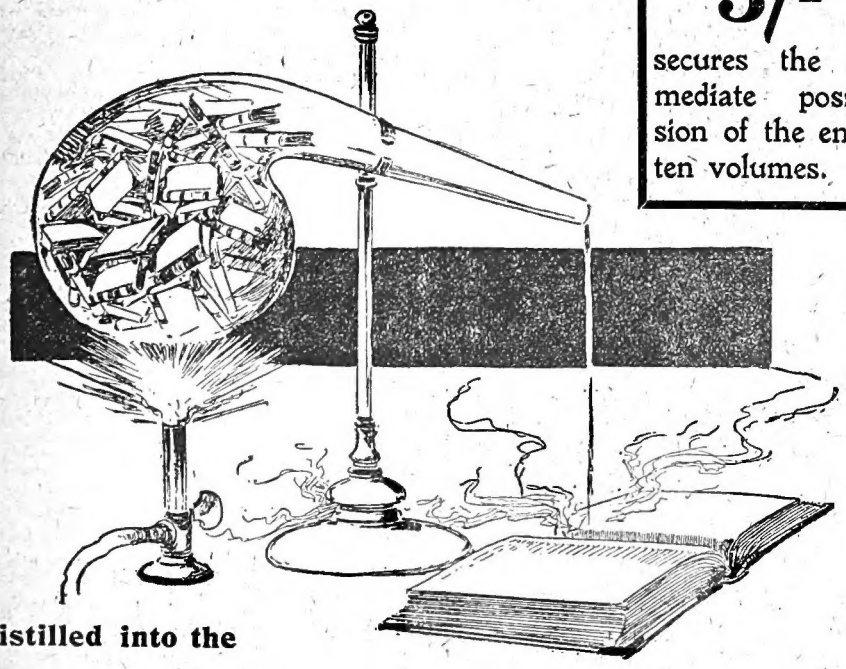
We children always called Gwendoline "Dick," to avoid the difficulty of her long-sounding name, I suppose, and I honestly believe that our respective parents entertained the idea that a marriage between us was quite a possible and natural thing. I went away to school at Brighton, and Mensmore, being a somewhat precocious lad, joined the same school before I left it. The head-master, the Rev. Septimus Childe, was an old friend of my father's, and when he wished to purchase a house at Putney—the terrible house which has figured in my dreams for the past three months as a Place of Skulls—my parents put pressure on my mother's trustees to make the transaction an easy one. Of course I knew it well. We regarded it in those early years as a town house, and always lived there during the season.

(To be continued.)

Digitized by Google

ALL HUMAN KNOWLEDGE

A preliminary payment of only **3/-** secures the immediate possession of the entire ten volumes.



Is distilled into the

20th Century Chambers's Encyclopædia.

Drop by drop, line upon line, here a little, there a little, has the immense mass of the wisdom of ages been fused, burned, distilled, assorted, compiled. These great ten volumes are the result.

It must be remembered that this offer is necessarily of only temporary duration. Only 10,000 sets can be had for distribution on these liberal terms. Chambers's Encyclopædia is so favourably known, and the 20th Century Edition will be so generally desired, that the distribution of these 10,000 sets may be only a question of a few days. That is why you need to act promptly if you wish to share in the benefits of our offer.

Cut Out this Application Form *and hand it at once with 3s. to your Bookseller or Newsagent for transmission to the* Daily Express. *Subscribers desiring to complete the purchase in a single payment need only send name and address, making cheque or money order payable to the order of Lloyd's Bank Ltd. If cloth set is desired, enclose £3 15s.; if Half Morocco, £5 12s. 6d.*

To the General Manager, Daily Express,
17 Tudor Street, London, E.C.

Date.....1901.

I enclose 3s. Please send me Chambers's Encyclopædia (20th Century Issue).

[Strike out one of these lines.] (a) Cloth, for which I agree to make to you, or to anyone you may appoint, nine further payments of 8s. 6d. each.
(b) Half Morocco, for which I agree to make to you, or to anyone you may appoint, nine further payments of 13s. each,

my next payment upon delivery of the complete ten volumes, and my succeeding payments on the corresponding day of each month following. Until such payments are completed, I engage that the volumes remain your property, and shall not be disposed of by sale or otherwise. I further agree that if, owing to unforeseen circumstances, of which you shall be the judge, the volumes cannot be delivered, the return of this deposit of 3s. shall cancel this agreement.

[H9] [Signed] .....

Rank or Occupation].....[Address].....

CARRIAGE PAID TO ANY RAILWAY STATION IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

Digitized by Google

THE EDITOR'S PAGE.

It is with the utmost pleasure that I perceive how quickly the revival of the "Editor's Page" has become a favourite with readers. Numbers of congratulatory letters have reached me, for which I am duly grateful. What I like mainly about these letters is the spirit of genuine friendship which seems to pervade them. There is nothing else so pleasing to an editor as to find that his readers, although personally unknown to him, are yet his most cordial friends at heart. I can assure everybody that the feeling is sincerely reciprocated.

❦❦❦

An ounce of help is worth a hundredweight of sympathy, is an old saying. Well, I am glad to say I am receiving both from readers. The "ounces of help" are coming up with most generous overweight. In what way? Why, in the obtaining of new readers. My friends are recommending *Short Stories* to their acquaintances, which is the kindest thing they could do for me.

❦❦❦

This reminds me that the present is an admirable time for this sort of recommendation. For in the course of a week or two we shall begin the publication of a new serial story.

This story is by Headon Hill, the well-known author of "The Peril of the Prince," "Beacon Fires," "By a Hair's Breadth," "Guilty Gold," and other famous novels. Our story is entitled:

"The Fate of Michael Standridge."

It is a good, strong, dramatic novel, full of exciting incidents, and entertaining from the first chapter to the last. Those who like good fiction should on no account miss it. As the demand will be very great it will be wise to order a copy beforehand.

❦❦❦

"G. E. G."—Stage prompters have hitherto been drawn from the ranks of men, but a well-known London theatre has now a woman prompter. So far she is a success, as it has been found that her voice carries farther than a man's. The compass of a woman's voice being smaller, and the tone clearer and higher, it can be thrown farther than the deeper and more resonant voice of a male. Again, a woman's enunciation is better than a man's at any time; she speaks more distinctly.

❦❦❦

Another field of labour in connection with the stage has been thrown open to women. The designing of costumes has been done by men up to the present time, mainly by London artists. A young lady who has been successful in designing many of the costumes for several dress pieces in London, and whose commissions for the designing of dresses for coming stage representations are numerous, is unselfish enough to say that young ladies desirous of following her would find plenty of scope and a large field where their services could be utilised. But they must have training.

❦❦❦

Regarding our weekly Postcard Competition, there is a diversity of opinion. A good number of readers are in favour of reverting to the aforetime order of things, and having a special subject set each week, while others advocate the continuance of the present arrangement, which makes eligible any anecdote on any subject.

I shall do my best to meet everybody's pleasure by compromising the matter. Next week, therefore, I shall set one particular subject, and periodically repeat the experiment. This will be an additional competition, as the present one will be continued as usual.

❦❦❦

"Mabel" is engaged to Dick. She has been engaged seven years, but never once in all that time has Dick ever asked her to name the day. Mabel is beginning to wonder if she will ever change her name. She is too bashful to ask Dick direct, and he seems impervious to hints. She asks me for advice.

Well, if I were you, "Mabel," I should just put the question to him either verbally or by letter. Seven years is quite long enough for Dick or any other man to have made up his mind, and it is only fair to you that he should declare his intentions definitely. Perhaps, if you sent him *Short Stories* with this paragraph marked, it might have the desired effect.

❦❦❦

"Tall" (Langley) would be a sailor bold. He is bored by the life of Birmingham, and sighs for a life on the ocean wave. "Once aboard a merchant ship," he says in effect, "and happiness is mine."

To get such a berth as he desires, he cannot do better than apply to some steamship company; say, for instance, the Union-Castle Line, Fenchurch Street, London, E.C., or the White Star Co., Leadenhall St., E.C. Other addresses may be obtained from the shipping advertisements in the daily newspapers.

TO CONTRIBUTORS.

I am open to consider original stories of any length from 1,500 to 4,000 words. The character of stories required may be best ascertained by a careful reading of the contents of the paper. All MSS. are dealt with promptly, and every effort is made to return rejected stories which are accompanied by stamped addressed envelopes. At the same time, I cannot hold myself responsible for MSS. accidentally lost. Communications of this kind should be addressed The Editor, *Short Stories*, Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, Strand, W.C.

SHORT STORIES ADVERTISEMENT RATES.

Single column, per inch, per insertion	£0 10 0
Double ,, ,, ,,	1 0 0
Full page inside, facing page of matter, either white paper or 2nd or 3rd page of cover, or back page, per insertion	10 0 0
Half-page ,, ,, ,,	5 0 0
Quarter-page ,, ,,	2 10 0
Eighth-page ,, ,,	1 5 0
Front page, whole ,, ,,	12 10 0
,, half ,, ,,	6 5 0

All spaces above one-eighth of a page are charged at per page rate.

Series discount: 5 per cent. for 13, 10 per cent. for 26, 15 per cent. for 52 insertions.

Black blocks are charged 25 per cent. extra. All advertisements are subject to approval. All copy must be sent in by Noon on **Tuesday**, March 26th, if intended for the issue on sale April 9th, and dated April 13th. The Proprietors reserve the right to hold over or suspend the insertion of any advertisement without prejudice to other insertions on order. All communications should be addressed to the Advertisement Manager, "Pearson's Weekly" Offices, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Printed by Horace Cox, Bream's Buildings, London, E.C., and published by C. Arthur Pearson Ltd., Pearson's Buildings, Henrietta Street, London, W.C.

Digitized by Google

Height 12ins. Width 7ins.

Rye Clock

(WITH ALARUM) **18/-**

A FREE TRIAL FOR 2/6

OUR **20th CENTURY CATALOGUE** containing illustrations of Watches, Clocks, Jewellery, &c., &c., at 20 per cent. below London prices will be sent to any address on receipt of postcard.

OUR TERMS.

We will supply any reader of *Short Stories* with one of our Parcels of Cutlery on monthly payments as follows:—

YOU send us **2/6** and your name and address, and we will send you one on approval.

IF you do approve of it you send us **2/6** more on receiving parcel, and **5/-** each month for four months, making the full **25/-**.

BUT OUR NET-CASH-WITH-ORDER-PRICE IS 22/6 ONLY.

And we will refund the cash sent if you do not approve of the parcel and you return it at once.

(Signed) J. N. MASTERS.

Each Parcel contains 50 High-Class Table Articles.

RETAIL CASH PRICES.

6	White Bone Table Knives	3/6
6	" " Dessert "	3/-
6	"Warewite" Table Forks	5/3
6	" Dessert "	3/9
2	" Table Spoons	1/9
6	" Dessert "	3/9
6	" Tea Spoons	2/-
1 pair	" Sugar Tongs	1/-
1 only	" Sugar Sifter	1/6
6	" Egg Spoons	1/6
2	" Salt Spoons	1/-
2	" Mustard Spoons	1/-

50 "Good Enough for a Gentleman's Table."

WE will supply any reader of *Short Stories* with one of these **18/-** Alarum Clocks on monthly payments as follows:

YOU send us **2/6** with your name and address, and we will send you one on approval.

IF you approve of it, you send us **3/-** on receipt, and **2/6** each month for five months, making the full **18/-**.

BUT OUR NET-CASH-WITH-ORDER PRICE IS **16/-** ONLY.

And we will refund the Cash sent, if you do not approve of the Clock, and you return it at once. (Signed) J. N. MASTERS.

PLEASE NOTE! That we also supply other goods on similar terms.

SILVER, 2/-

Gold 20/-

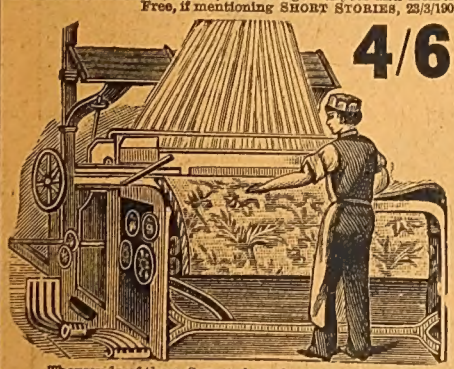
Any name supplied.

J. N. MASTERS LIMITED "VERACITY" WATCHMAKERS, &c., RYE, SUSSEX.

GIGANTIC BANKRUPTCY SALE CATALOGUE.

***Re* BRITISH CARPET WEAVING CO., late of Old St., London.**

F. HODGSON & SONS, of LEEDS, have purchased for Cash the whole of the business, goodwill, and effects from Official Trustee in Bankruptcy. Illustrated Sale Catalogue of Brussels, Axminster, Velvet, and Foreign Carpets and Hearthrugs can be had Post Free, if mentioning SHORT STORIES, 23/3/1901.



4/6

To readers of SHORT STORIES, 23/3/1901. On receipt of Postal Order or stamps value (Regd.) we will send you the **Largest Genuine Reversible Carpet in Brussels Finish, with Rug,** ever sold at the Price, direct from the Looms to any address on receipt of amount. Suitable for drawing-room, dining-room, bedroom, &c., bordered and woven in Brussels Patterns, as an advertisement for our goods, thus saving any middle profit. Remember, these are woven and are made of a material almost equal to wool.

Thousands of these Carpets have been already sold at double these prices.

SPECIAL OFFER.—2 Carpets and 2 Rugs, 8/-.

Prodigious sale of the "PRUDENTIAL"

BRUSSELETTE CARPETS

Admittedly The Marvel of the Age.

Woven and Reversible, rich Brussels and Turkey Patterns and Colourings, superior quality, with handsome Border to match. A Marvel of Excellence and Beauty. These Carpets are superb imitations of real Brussels, and except by the closest scrutiny, the difference cannot be detected.

6 ft. by 6 ft. **2/11**	**REDUCED SALE PRICE.**		6 ft. by 7½ft. **3/11**
6 ft. by 9 ft. **4/9**	7½ft. by 9 ft. **5/11**	9 ft. by 9 ft. **7/6**	9 ft. by 10½ft. **8/6**
9 ft. by 12 ft. **9/6**	10½ft. by 12 ft. **11/6**	9 ft. by 15 ft. **12/6**	12 ft. by 12 ft. **12/9**
12 ft. by 13½ft. **14/3**	12 ft. by 15 ft. **15/9**	12 ft. by 18 ft. **19/6**	12 ft. by 21 ft. **22/6**

When ordering, please mention if for Bed, Dining, Drawing, or Sitting Room, and any particular colour preferred.

A Brusselette Hearthrug (Reg.) to match, **sent for 1/6 extra, size 2yd. by 1yd.**

THE **QUEEN'S ROYAL HEARTHRUGS** (*Registered.*)

6 by 3ft. **2/-** each.

Postage 6d. extra.

SPECIAL OFFER:

3 for **5/9**; 6 for **11/3**; 12 for **22/-**

PATRONISED BY ROYALTY.

THE **QUEEN'S ROYAL HEARTHRUGS** (*Registered.*)

6 by 3ft. **2/-** each.

Postage 6d. extra.

SPECIAL OFFER:

3 for **5/9**; 6 for **11/3**; 12 for **22/-**

Gigantic Sale of the "Queen's Royal" Household Reversible Rich Turkey Pattern

Trade Mark on all goods. **CARPETS** (Regd.) Beware of Imitations.

Admittedly the Cheapest in the World. Woven without seam. Altogether superior quality, with medallion corners, also handsome border to correspond. A marvel of excellence and beauty. Thousands of repeat orders and testimonials received, giving the highest satisfaction. When ordering, please mention if for Bed, Dining, Drawing, or Sitting Room, and any particular colour preferred.

	Reduced Sale Price.		Reduced Sale Price.		Reduced Sale Price.
6ft. by 6 ft.	**4/11**	9ft. by 9 ft.	**11/-**	12ft. by 12 ft.	**21/-**
8ft. by 7½ft.	**6/-**	9ft. by 10½ft.	**13/6**	9ft. by 15 ft.	**19/6**
6ft. by 9 ft.	**7/6**	9ft. by 12 ft.	**15/-**	12ft. by 13½ft.	**22/-**
8ft. by 9 ft.	**9/-**	9ft. by 13½ft.	**16/6**	2ft. by 15 ft.	**25/6**
6ft. by 12 ft.	**10/6**	10½ft. by 12 ft.	**18/-**	12ft. by 18 ft.	**30/-**
				12ft. by 21 ft.	**35/6**

The Leading Designs this season of the "Queen's Royal" Household Reversible Carpets and Hearthrugs are a combination of the Oriental, Persian, and Turkish make, viz: Indian Red, Dark Myrtle, Orange, Camel, Turquoise and Dark Blue, Gold, Walnut, Fawn, and Amber.

The Rectory, Athy, January 11th.

The Rev. Canon MacDonald writes: "I shall be pleased to have some of the 'Queen's Royal' Hearthrugs and Carpets, etc., such as Mr. Hodgson supplied in 1887."

Clonhugh, Multyfarnham, January 1st.

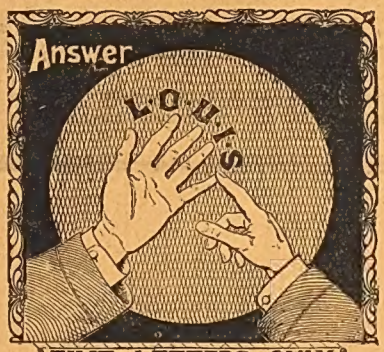
Lord Greville writes: "I consider the 'Queen's Royal' Hearthrugs received are splendid value for the money. His Lordship would like three more sent him for 7/-. Cheque enclosed."

Cheques and P.O.'s payable to—

F. HODGSON & SONS, WOODSLEY ROAD, LEEDS.

Digitized by Google

HOW DO YOU SPELL VELVETEEN?



FIVE LETTERS ONLY.

Don't Forget this when You Buy.

Every Yard is Stamped L-O-U-I-S

WHEN BUYING A CHEAP BICYCLE,

look at the tyres. If they are not

DUNLOP TYRES

the machine is not cheap at any price.

Trade Mark.

The DUNLOP PNEUMATIC TYRE CO., Ltd.,
FACTORY: Alma Street, Coventry;
160 Clerkenwell Road, E.C., London.

BRANCHES: Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Nottingham, Manchester, Glasgow, Dublin, &c.

NATURE'S AID TO THE SKIN

Icilma

Icilma is the modern Fountain of Youth Pejave

THE OXYGENISED NATURAL WATER

The only Natural and absolutely Safe Remedy for the Complexion, for the Nursery, for Cuts, Bruises, Nettlerash and all Irritations of the Skin, Chilblains, Chapped Skins, Roughness from East Winds, Spring, Nettle Rashes, Children's Rashes. **Never be without it; and if a Clear, Smooth Transparent Skin is desired, use always**

ICILMA SOAP MADE WITH ICILMA WATER.

(N.B.—"Icilma" has been examined at Somerset House, and as a Natural Mineral Water is exempt from the Patent Medicine Stamp.)

Shilling Bottles (Scented 2s.)

"ICILMA," 142 Gray's Inn Road, W.C. Of all Chemists & Stores wholesale: Barclay & Sons Ltd., 95 Farringdon Street, London, E.C.

OROCO SOX

A New Invention to keep the feet warm and dry yet allowing perfect ventilation

18 pairs post free for 1/- State size required.

A boon for tender & tired feet

WILL SUIT YOU DOWN TO THE GROUND.

OROCO MF'G. Co. WIGAN.

Reckitt's PARIS Blue.

The Best is the Cheapest.

Digitized by Google